Signs, wonders and church growth

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"SIGNS, WONDERS AND CHURCH GROWTH"

THE THEME OF POWER IN CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALISM

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE WORKS OF JOHN WIMBER

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THESIS SYNOPSIS

As a phenomenon, fundamentalism is commonly found in many of the world's major religions. It appears to have an enduring appeal and to be more than capable of surviving in the post-modern age, successfully adapting itself in different cultures, social climates and generations. Yet, biblical fundamentalism, as a complete system of belief, has not been systematically engaged with by theologians. Although useful and insightful critiques are available, they often do less than justice to the multifarious phenomenon of fundamentalism. This study is an attempt at a systematic engagement using insights from Social Scientists, most especially the work of Peter Berger and Stewart Clegg. A definition of fundamentalism is advanced. It is shown that what constitutes fundamentalism is not simply the beliefs, but the way in which they are held. Fundamentalism is a disposition, with controlling standards and structures.

Heuristic-phenomenological methods are applied to a representative case-study, John Wimber, a sophisticated fundamentalist from the 'Revivalist Tradition'. The thesis holds that fundamentalism can only be properly understood in terms of power: how fundamentalists perceive the power of God, how they mediate it, organise themselves around it, reify it and assess its impact. It is suggested that fundamentalists access power via an inductive theological strategy, giving rise to a 'power circuit' or framework, that issues stability and unity to adherents via its controlling agents.

Application of the heuristic methodology gives insight into Wimber's ideology, theology, Christology and pneumatology. It is useful in assessing his practical ecclesiology and missiology. Indeed, the phenomenology proposed can reveal the underlining ontology of God at work in fundamentalism generally, namely, a desire to assert the total omnipotence of God, which is accessible through controlling agents that are held to be indispensable and infallible. The concluding Chapters suggest that fundamentalists primarily emphasise God's being as power, and seek agencies that will reify that. This is held to be in sharp contrast to a more orthodox position, that would see God's ontology as being centred on love.

C O N T E N T S

"SIGNS, WONDERS AND CHURCH GROWTH": THE THEME OF POWER IN CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALISM, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE WORKS OF JOHN WIMBER

Key to Abbreviations

used for major works

by John Wimber

TC	The Cross (tapes plus manual)
SWCG I	Power Evangelism: Signs, Wonders and Church Growth I (tapes plus manual)
SWCG II	Power Healing: Signs, Wonders and Church Growth II (tapes plus manual)
SW	Spiritual Warfare [3 Volumes] (tapes plus manual)
KOG	The Kingdom of God (booklet)
SOV	Songs of the Vineyard [2 Volumes] (books)
PP	Power Points (tapes plus manual)
PE	Power Evangelism (book)
PH	Power Healing (book)
DSG	The Dynamics of Spiritual Growth (book)

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Martyn Percy, Bedford, 1993.

Part One Understanding Fundamentalism

CHAPTER ONE

FUNDAMENTALISM AS A CONCERN OF THEOLOGY

a. Fundamentalism. The State of the Research

Since the late 1970's and 1980's, the politicization of what some observers call the 'New Religious Right' has brought an end to the traditional theological neglect of fundamentalist movements. The maintenance of an undialectically critical stance over many years could no longer be sustained. a form of faith community once believed to be in its death throes was actually alive and well in a variety of guises, and attracting a large following. However, the response of theology to the contemporary fundamentalist movement has not significantly deviated from the established pattern of either indifference or non-dialogical critiques. It is true of course, that theologians in general deal with fundamentalism more than they did previously, but overall, their responses to the movement have often been much less than studying it seriously or empathetically. For example, the majority of studies in the last two decades have either been historical analyses, focussing on the genesis and subsequent career of fundamentalism in the twentieth century[1], or more popular studies conducted by persons on the margins of academic contexts[2]. Those theologians who have not taken this path have tended to respond to contemporary fundamentalism by focussing their interests on its politicized faction[3], or on 'evangelicalism', in which fundamentalism and 'new evangelicalism' are often carelessly lumped together as a monolithic reality[4]. It is my contention that although there is much talk about fundamentalism today, there are few theological critiques that see the movement as a tradition in its own right. An empathetic, critical and systematic analysis of the movement is required, if the power and attraction of contemporary fundamentalism in all its various forms is to be properly understood and critiqued. My approach to the fundamentalist movement will therefore be significantly different from other works that cover the subject.

The scale of the systematic problem before us can be appreciated if one briefly reviews some of the more recent critiques offered. The scope of this thesis necessitates that only a few approaches can be considered here. Nevertheless, I hold that these critiques are representative of the type of theological engagement contemporary fundamentalism has so far been subject to. I have divided these dissertations into four broad categories, which reflect the type of critique the author has attempted to execute. The categories are. (i) Undialectical Interpretations, (ii) Sympathetic Readings, (iii) Theological-Descriptive methods, and (iv) Phenomenological Studies. There is a brief Conclusion (v) which completes this section.

(i) Undialectical Interpretations: Three works stand out as significant: James Barr's Fundamentalism (1978), Gabriel Fackre's The Religious Right and Christian Faith (1982) and Harvey Cox's Religion in the Secular City (1984). All of the above authors have also contributed to the study of fundamentalism outside these works, and where there are arguments relevant to our review these are also considered.

James Barr's Fundamentalism (1978) was the first major theological analysis of fundamentalism since Gabriel Hebert's Fundamentalism and the Church (1957), a critical reading of fundamentalism from the point of view of neo-orthodox theology and Anglican ecclesiology. Consistent with these commitments, Hebert praised fundamentalism for its opposition to the heresy of nineteenth century liberalism but criticized its refusal to accept historical-critical approaches to scripture and its tendency towards sectarianism in ecclesial polity (Hebert termed this last criticism as "low church attitudes": 1957, pp. 78-96).

Barr's work appeared before the politicization of fundamentalism in America in the early 1980's, to which we have already referred. Consequently, his work does not suffer from inordinate attention to the overtly political forms of the movement which have often governed more recent analyses. A major feature of Barr's thesis is the way in which he

draws connections between 'pure' American fundamentalism and conservative British evangelicalism, and in fact bases much of his analysis on the latter phenomenon. We shall return to definitions of fundamentalism later, but for the moment, Barr describes fundamentalism as

> a transatlantic common enterprise; it is in many ways a striking common achievement of the Anglo-Saxon peoples, and builds upon their cultural and philosophical heritage. The greatest creativity has been on the American side. In the eighteenth century the names of the great revivalists came from both sides of the Atlantic: Wesley, Whitfield, Jonathan Edwards. But from the nineteenth century onwards the major names were American: Finney, Torrey, Barnhouse, Billy Graham[5].

Barr's theses offers a number of commendable insights. His observation that fundamentalism is a 'transatlantic common enterprise', yet is now dominated by America, with theological, cultural and behavioural connections to revivalism, will make the selection of John Wimber as a suitable case-study later on in this thesis especially appropriate. But there are problems with an approach that fails to distinguish between American fundamentalism and British conservative evangelicalism. Barr himself admits that they are not precise equivalents, but nevertheless continues to use the term 'fundamentalist' to describe them both; effectively, he operates with the definition in order to identify any 'position more conservative or more extreme than is the common'[6]. In this sense, he is not much further on than Hebert (writing in 1957), as both authors seem to allude to a commonly held normative tradition which is 'broad' or 'open', that represents most of Christian belief and expression. This is a quite untenable presupposition, since there is a good case for suggesting that the majority (i.e., normative) of Christian praxis is and has been until the nineteenth century, fundamentalist in orientation.[7]

As Barr proceeds with his analysis, a number of problems with his approach become apparent. Firstly, Barr takes British conservative evangelicalism as the prototype for fundamentalism and then scans the American religious scene for phenomena that conform to his reading of the British standard. As a consequence, an understanding of the inner logic of fundamentalism is absent, and his definition of it only works by reference

to groups of which he is not part, and some of whom would eschew the label, or deny the right of others to own it. Secondly, Barr's definition fails to identify the nature of the fundamentals that give rise to fundamentalism, except in a most basic structural form. For example, it is one thing to assert that inerrancy is a major component of the fundamentalist work, and then critique the logical coherence of such a component. But what Barr does not address is why one or a number of components are there in the first place. What does the existence of such fundamentals or ariticles of faith tell us about the identity and trajectory of communities in their relation to God and to the world? Thirdly, Barr's interpretation of fundamentalism is what I would term undialectical. He portrays fundamentalism as a growing branch of simplistic sectarianism, a movement that is reductive in orientation, attempting to establish a form of anti-modernist neo-orthodoxy that opposes the alleged erosion that was brought about by liberals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In doing this, he fails to allow fundamentalism to define or speak for itself, and consequently does not appreciate the tasks and the worlds that fundamentalism is trying to engage with.* Fourthly, much of Barr's critique depends on scholarly expressions of fundamentalism, especially those concerning Scripture and biblical interpretation. This thesis, however, will seek to avoid depending solely on 'academic' fundamentalism in an effort to understand the more essential articles of faith that might inform more 'ordinary' fundamentalist beliefs and practices.

Gabriel Fackre's The Religious Right and Christian Faith (1982) is another resource for considering the understanding of fundamentalism. Fackre attempts to show how the theology of the 'religious right' both converges and conflicts with 'normative Christian belief' (Fackre, 1982: xiii). The apparent virtue of Fackre's analysis is its dialectical approach; unlike Barr, he tries to read and affirm the positive features of fundamentalist theology and also to criticise its negatives. However, he does not analyse contemporary fundamentalism, in spite of taking issue with aspects of its theology. Fackre's agenda is to tackle the 'religious right' of the 1980's, which had such a prominent role in American politics and society. He considers the 'religious right' to be a subset of the

fundamentalist movement (Fackre, 1982:6), based on his interpretation of Jerry Falwell and the Moral Majority. This is highly problematic, since whilst Falwell may well be representative of the religious right as Fackre argues (1982. xi), Falwell cannot be taken as the principal spokesperson for fundamentalists. So, while Fackre's work is significant for its analysis and critique of a portion of fundamentalism, it cannot be characterised as an analysis of the full scope of the movement. Fackre confines his work to a single voice within fundamentalism, as we shall do later. But where our strategy differs from that of Fackre is in the way the spokesperson is regarded and how they are treated. Fackre regards Falwell as the preeminent fundamentalist, and then criticises him, in order to discredit the whole fundamentalist enterprise. In our analysis, Wimber will be treated as a case-study and not as a spokesperson, and the empathetic analysis and critique of his work and works that follow could then, it is suggested, be used as an interpretative key for other forms of fundamentalism.

Harvey Cox's treatment of fundamentalism, which comprises one third of Religion in the Secular City (1984), also takes Falwell as the major representative of fundamentalism. Like Fackre and Barr before him though, there is the lack of a technical definition of what fundamentalism actually means and is. Like Fackre, Cox at first sight appears to want a genuine dialogue with fundamentalism, which presupposes he is prepared to listen and learn as much as he is to speak and critique. Yet despite his intentions, Cox's conclusions are disappointing, suggesting ultimately that fundamentalism has little to do with theology in a post-modern age, and is therefore not worth engaging with. Contrary to Cox, I wish to say that fundamentalism needs proper systematic engagement, if its power and attraction are to be understood in the face of post-modernism and increasing religious plurality.

(ii) Sympathetic Readings. To date, the most important attempt at a systematic analysis in this category is Richard Coleman's Issues of Theological Conflict (1980). Coleman, an evangelical, carefully sets out some of the major issues he believes separate fundamentalists from 'liberals'. The heart of his book is the proposition that a 'middle

ground' of agreement is both possible and desirable. However, his analysis is flawed, since he adopts 'new evangelicalism' as the normative expression of contemporary fundamentalism, and again, as with the previous contributions we have discussed, fails to articulate and identify what he means by pure fundamentalist belief and practice. Whilst it is true that fundamentalists and new evangelicals might share certain theological assumptions and beliefs, the two communities are quite distinctive. This is argued for rigorously by 'new evangelicals' and fundamentalists alike. For example, Dr R.T. France has offered a recent critique of James Barr's Fundamentalism and Escaping from Fundamentalism (1984), making precisely this point:

> We would contend that it is possible (indeed necessary) to be open to new approaches in biblical interpretation and theology, and to learn from and respond to current concerns in the wider theological world, while continuing to hold the doctrines of classical evangelicalism... There is, in other words, an 'evangelicalism' which is neither 'fundamentalist' or 'liberal'... It is this strand ... which is most difficult to recognise in terms of the model set up in Barr's [work]...[9]

Coleman's book rests on the hope of a genuine and fruitful dialogue between 'right-wing liberals' and 'left-wing evangelicals', since he believes one can now speak of evangelical liberals and liberal evangelicals (Coleman, 1980, xiv). But such a thesis cannot be a functional base for explaining the power and attraction of contemporary fundamentalism. Coleman's work may be useful in highlighting a growing consensus amongst some North American Protestants on certain issues, but it is neither a description nor prescription for the fundamentalist community, since his conclusions are founded on the (so-called) 'new evangelical' movement. Coleman has failed to grasp that whilst aspects of North American evangelicalism may well desire and pursue dialogue with non-evangelicals, fundamentalists tend to eschew dialogue altogether. As we shall see shortly, it is partly the non-dialogical stance of fundamentalist movements that makes them such a vital topic for theological engagement. How does theology respond to a faith perspective that insists largely on monologue rather than dialogue? Coleman's thesis depends on communities - such as 'new evangelicals' - who actually do engage in dialogue, yet also seem to

exhibit fundamentalist tendencies, but this cannot be a substitute for actually attempting a systematic critique of the genuine type of non-dialogical fundamentalism we seek to explore.[10]

Other more systematically-minded dissertations have taken a different route in attempting to read fundamentalism sympathetically. Coleman sought to understand fundamentalism by identifying items of essential agreement that it might hold in common with other types of Christianity - 'common ground'. In other words, the 'reading' of fundamentalism, although sympathetic, is in fact, reductionist.

Other evangelical or 'new evangelical' interpreters such as Richard Quebedeaux, Ernest Sandeen and George Marsden also fail to avoid the trap of reductionism in their attempt to read fundamentalist belief and practice with a sympathetic understanding. Their critical strategies tend towards defining fundamentalism according to one or two notable historical or theological characteristics. Quebedeaux, for example (The Young Evangelicals, 1974) offers just two (!) taxonomic breakdowns of fundamentalist world-views in the twentieth century, that purport to represent normative fundamentalism. Similarly, Sandeen (see The Roots of Fundamentalism, 1970) insists that fundamentalism in America is basically an ideological alliance between nineteenth century millenarianism (his term for dispensational premillennialists) and the (Princetonian) doctrine of biblical inerrancy.[11]

Marsden, among others, has challenged the idea that there are just one or two primary roots from which all fundamentalism is derived, but has succeeded only in modifying and expanding the type of strategy that is particular to the likes of Quebedeaux and Sandeen. Marsden (see Fundamentalism and American Culture, 1980) works from a more eclectic base, pointing out that not all fundamentalists are premillennialists, non-intellectual, socially unconcerned, or basically temperate beings: the biographies of prominent fundamentalists and ordinary ones show this to be wrong. Marsden contends that the more closely one studies fundamentalism, the more one realizes that fundamentalists cannot be easily grouped together as though they shared one or two basic beliefs or behaviours.

Fundamentalism is a multi-faceted phenomenon, and represents a conglomeration of people and beliefs whose only point of agreement, the authority of the Bible, resembles a theological umbrella under which a seemingly infinite variety of religious expressions find shelter and meaning. Beyond inerrancy however, the particulars of ideology and religious practice vary widely.

Marsden's treatment of fundamentalism stands apart from other reconstructions in recognizing the multi-dimensional personality of fundamentalists and their movement. Yet he does so without sharply defining what fundamentalism is beyond being a legitimate movement within American Evangelicalism. In my view, this is a major failing in his work. Also, like Quebedeaux and Sandeen before him, the analysis aims at simplifying complex ideas and phenomena into their constituent parts, in the belief that this will explain the inner logic of fundamentalism, and that by reducing the hard core of essential beliefs - using the metaphor 'root' or 'umbrella' - they will become more palatable to others. Whilst it is true that Marsden adopts a more sophisticated analysis than others, it is still seriously flawed. This is because, behind the sympathetic readings discussed, I detect a reductive approach to fundamentalism, with all the conventional problems associated with reductionism. Religious behaviour and beliefs cannot be simply explained by reducing their origin to cultural or theological phenomena, no matter how sympathetically that is done. Such a stategy can only ever be of partial benefit. So far, such an approach is very far from a systematic engagement.

(iii)Theological-Descriptive. In more recent years, this type of criticism has become increasingly discernible. I term it 'theological-descriptive', because each of the approaches that correspond to this category have in some sense attempted to give an account of and represent fundamentalism, as it has actually been encountered, yet through the medium of a specifically declared form of criticism, that has theological implicature for the group studied. Contrary to the undialectical and sympathetic approaches, critics in this category are more precise about what critical tools are being applied to fundamentalistic discourse and behaviour, and do not involve themselves in sympathetic or reductive forms of exegesis. For example, an

increasing number of anthropologists, sociologists and scholars in linguistics and comparative religion are devoting time and attention to study of fundamentalism. Each describe the phenomenon as they encounter it in accordance with the particular discipline they bring to bear upon the subject. Conclusions that have some theological significance can often result. There is a vast array of such dissertations, employing pure, applied or inter-disciplinary methodologies. Only the most significant works can be considered here, since space does not permit a general overview of all that is available.

A work like Lionel Caplan's (ed.) Studies in Religious Fundamentalism (1988) for example, offers ten papers from an inter-collegiate seminar series organised by the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, in 1985. Although many of the essays regard Barr's work on fundamentalism as foundational, the comparative aspect of the study is most illuminating, as far as comparative studies can go. Although a technical definition of fundamentalism is lacking, giving the book a weak sense of coherence, one of the achievements of the approaches employed by the broadly comparative outlook is to greatly expand the concept of fundamentalism. No longer is it just a particular form of American Protestantism here, fundamentalism is recognised in other religions, associated with indigenous African tribal myth and ritual, and linked, more familiarly, to the politicization of the 'new right'. Fundamentalism emerges as a type of construct, a way of being in the world, with the pertinent inner-life and micro-ecology sustained by ideas that are held to be essential. The recent Fundamentalisms Observed (Eds. M. Marty and R. Scott-Apple, 1992), continues this agenda. The first of six planned volumes from the 'Fundamentalism Project' set up by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the book recognises that engaging with 'the task of understanding fundamentalisms is urgent at a time when these movements are frequently catalysts in an unsettled world'. Much of the endeavour of Fundamentalisms Observed seems to echo Robin Gill's Competing Convictions (1989) in which Gill attempts to explain why and how fundamentalist groups are not amenable to the rational questioning of their beliefs. The greater the pressure exerted on such groups, the more likely they are to become sectarian and fanatical. The 'competing convictions' of Gill's thesis are

that absolutism and relativism are inherent in Christian belief, although he believes that absolutism always contains the seeds of its own downfall. Gill's critique is stimulating, yet too wide-ranging to be suitably penetrating.

In contrast, and from a sociological perspective, the work of Steve Bruce is especially worthy of note. His Firm in the Faith (1984) and God Save Ulster (1988) deal respectively with the identity of a college Christian Union, and the definitive Protestantism of Ian Paisley. His analysis of the relationship between tradition and charisma (1986: 199-219) is particularly impressive, and helps form the basis for some remarks in Chapter Three of this thesis. The work of Bruce on 'television evangelists' (Pray TV, 1990) contains useful insights into American fundamentalism. In highlighting their communicative and organisational skills, he questions the nature and type of American church engendered by such activity, and its subsequent re-involvement in public life and the media. Bruce has written extensively on American Christianity, and has exposed with some sharpness the mechanics of 'tele-evangelism'. However, although his work has unearthed some important material that gives the reader an insight into some of the more 'scandalous' aspects of this particular type of fundamentalist discourse, there is an overall lack of penetration of the subject. Whilst Bruce - following other sociologists of religion - tells us much about the social and demographic make-up of 'tele-evangelists' and their audience, the reader is left with important questions unanswered. What, for instance, is particular about fundamentalist discourse? And what separates it from other forms of communication? How does their self-conscious social organisation attempt to mirror their perception of the power and authority of God? Although Bruce gives us helpful taxonomic breakdowns of various kinds, what is lacking is a serious account of the theological constructions in such groups that maintain ecclesial bonds through the articulation of fundamental articles of faith. However, we must not be too dismissive of Bruce. His sociological analysis is enormously valuable in raising matters of theological concern. Yet he is some way short of deploying a rigorous and fully systematic analysis. Fundamentalism is more than just a sociological phenomenon: it is theological, phenomenological,

epistemological and ontological. In this thesis we shall be attempting a more polymatheic approach in order to do justice to the breadth of behaviour and belief that is generally characterised by the term 'fundamentalist'.

Kathleen Boone's recent For the Bible Tells them So: The Discourse of Protestant Fundamentalism (1990) is an attempt to identify the 'rules' of discourse in fundamentalist rhetoric, which operate 'according to a sort of uniform anonymity, on all individuals who undertake to speak in this discursive field'.[14] Using the work of Michael Foucault, Boone probes the nature of authority in fundamentalist communities, paying particular attention to the interpersonal relationship between the interpreters of texts, the text and the audience. Boone's work is important, since it begins with the initial conviction that fundamentalists are sincere, so consequently and to a large extent, she does let them speak for themselves. She recognises that

> fundamentalists are [not] the village idiots of Christendom - intellectually benighted folk to be pitied or ruthless preachers to be pilloried. Fundamentalist discourse is in fact marked by an unrelenting rationalism, not the irrationalism or emotionalism with which [it] has so often been identified. (1990. 14)

Boone reads fundamentalism as a literary phenomenon, one in which an authoritative text shapes and motivates discourse, in the wider interests of discovering how authority functions in fundamentalist rapport. She concludes that in fundamentalist communities, it is the interpreter who rules, not the Bible. Although Boone's thesis is a significant advance on many of the previous dissertations discussed, it is of limited value for our enterprise here. Boone's treatment of discourse, using Foucault as an interpretative key, does not do justice to the whole fundamentalist world. Of course discourse is vital to fundamentalists, but there is more to fundamentalist communities than just speaking and writing. What of the ecclesial polity that results from the words? How do these words shape the theology, sociology and self-understanding of groups that deploy them? Boone's thesis does not go far enough, in my view, in making use of Foucault, stopping at discourse analysis is premature. Also problematic

(as with other critiques), there is a general discussion of the definition of fundamentalism, but little in the way of the author committing herself to articulating its identity.

Amongst the anthropological approaches, Sandra Sizer's Gospel Hymns and Social Religion (1978) is most notable. Sizer, agreeing with Barr that modern fundamentalism has its roots in 'transatlantic revivalism', sets out to critique revival hymns and social behaviour during periods of revival. However, her work is of limited use to us, as she only covers forms of fundamentalism up to 1920, prior to its modern revivalist era. Using Clifford Geertz's Religion as a Cultural System (1972) and The Thick Description. Towards an Interpretative Theory of Culture (1971), Sizer examines how the rhetoric of revival hymns reflects the social construction of reality and ideal-mythic constructs of fundamentalist communities. Her analysis leads her to conclude that fundamentalist and revivalist constructs are the product of disenchantment with urbanization in the eighteenth century, and post-modern pluralism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Perhaps the major achievement of Sizer's work though, is the stress she lays on symbols and metaphors as vehicles of communication in which the reality of the participating community can have their experiences and hopes transposed and transformed. The attention paid to symbol and metaphor is an indication that Sizer regards fundamentalist communities as a distinctive cultural and linguistic ontology in its own right. She does not regard the rhetoric of revivalism as merely the expression of experience, nor indeed, does she see it as simply a rather poor, mythic cognitive 'map'.

(iv)Phenomenological Studies. One of the effects of the proliferation of critiques in the theological-descriptive mould, has been the unconscious broadening of the category 'fundamentalism', into which many groups may now be said to belong. When Barr deployed the category (in 1978), he only had in mind certain American Protestants, and, in his view, their British counterparts. But fundamentalism is not just a transatlantic phenomenon; it is now recognised in the studies just discussed that it is also transdenominational and transreligious, and ultimately common to individual human and institutional experience. It is also not necessarily textually

based. Inerrancy in scripture or articles of faith may be crucial, but experience can also function similarly as a fundament. It is with this in mind that phenomenological studies have assumed a particular importance. Phenomenological studies lay particular stress on experience, in the belief that the very structures of individual and communal consciousness will ultimately point to the experience and expression of belief. It is a different approach from the others mentioned so far, in that it often aims at returning to the originality or origin of the immediate experience. Phenomenology can be reduced to creating a typology of religious phenomena, or, it can sometimes be used as 'tool' for 'letting the religion speak for itself' (i.e., claiming to be neutral). More properly though, phenomenology is a more developed discipline than this, often resting on a theory of religion and human nature. For example, Mircea Eliade's work on shamanism is self-consciously influenced by Jung's theory of archetypes, which leads Eliade to suggest that there is a type of mythic ontology which some religious traditions and societies share. Indeed, some would see Phenomenology as an ontology, the search for the fundamental categories we use in consciousness to interpret our existence, God and the world.

Phenomenological studies have become especially prominent in the study of charismatic-fundamentalist religion, which includes Pentecostalism and the emergent 'charismatic movement' within mainstream christianity. Walter Hollenweger's The Pentecostals. The Charismatic Movement in the Churches (1966. ET 1972) was the first work to draw attention to the sheer numbers of people caught up in the phenomenon known as charismatic christianity. Hollenweger points out that although some fundamentalists deny the right of 'charismatics' to own the title 'fundamentalist', both groups do adhere to the inerrancy of the Bible and claim to uphold traditional or fundamentalist positions on Jesus' deity, virgin birth, resurrection and second coming. 'Charismatics' and fundamentalists are also united in their opposition to theological liberalism. In fact, charismatics and fundamentalists often cannot be distinguished in essence, but only in form. In essence, both recognise that fundamental articles of faith serve to constitute the community that guards them, and that the operation of those fundamentals is a guarantee or deed of covenant, through which God mediates his past, present and future presence. The identity of the essence of

course, differs, yet they often behave similarly. Fundamentalists look to the giveness of the Bible, charistmatics look to the giveness of the Holy Spirit, catholic charismatics look to church dogma and the empowering possibilities of charismatic renewal. Yet both treat these quite different essences similarly: they are held to be absolutely authoritative, the word of God for given situations, indispensable, and essential for the constitution of the individual and community in response to God. They are also regarded as weapons - somewhat mechanistically - as tools or objects that will advance the cause of Christendom in an age of unbelief.

In the actual forms, the symptomatic expression of God's power appears to be different. Charismatics lay stress on the value of personal experiences and interpersonal experiences of God's power, such as healing, speaking in tongues or prophecy. Traditional fundamentalists stress the importance of correct belief, and tend to be anxious about doctrine. But even here, the forms are not as different as we might suppose: charismatics are just as dependent on tight-knit doctrinal boundaries as they are on experience, and traditional fundamentalists depend heavily on the 'born again experience' and experiencing the Bible as they encounter it, often through an interpreter, who in turn re-interprets the text in the light of particular contexts.

There is a wide range of material engaged in the analysis of charismatic-fundamentalist groups. Hollenweger's work has already been mentioned, and his scholarly overview of Pentecostalism on a world-wide canvas remains unsurpassed. His theological critique at the close of the book, however, is disappointing, and really only serves to underline the sectarian nature of charismatic-fundamentalist groups, whilst calling into question their ability to dialogue, and hence, ultimately, the possiblity of an ecumenical revival movement. Hollengeger recognises that charismatic-fundamentalism is transdenominational, but this will not have a unifying effect on the denominations themselves, since this particular form of belief is in essence, non-dialogical.

Other phenomenological treatments of charismatic-fundamentalism that are worthy of note include Michael P. Hamilton's <u>The Charismatic Movement</u>

(1975). he offers an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of charismatic religion from the perspective of sympathetic and non-sympathetic participants. John Kildahl's The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues (1972) focusses on the personal experiences of individuals and suggests that tongue speaking (glossolalia) should be understood as a variety of aberrant behaviour, like neurosis and other psychogenic disorders. Kildahl used psychiatric interviews and batteries of psychological tests to document his conclusion: that fundamentalists of this type were more submissive, suggestible, and dependent on leaders than normal. Dale Bruner's A Theology of the Holy Spirit (1970) attempts to trace the present Pentecostal experience to the New Testament. His work is in two sections, the first dealing with the experience and understanding of Pentecostals, with the second addressing Bruner's own New Testament understanding. James D.G. Dunn's Baptism in the Holy Spirit (1977) adopts a similar strategy, though his work is less comprehensive, and engages in a more exegetical study of the relevant portions of scripture. Though neither of these writers is Pentecostal, they nevertheless deal effectively with some of the essentials of the charismatic-fundamentalist tradition in their presentations.

(v)Conclusion It is clear from our survey so far, that fundamentalism as a movement (or individual fundamentalist exponents), may lay claim to be the 'Cinderella of theology'. There has been little in the way of serious theological engagement with fundamentalism in all its fullness. The undialectical forms of criticism are particularly problematic. The clear methodologies employed in analysis might lead one to believe that the critiques are just a developed list of complaints and personal dislikes. Although they contain much intuitive insight, which has some value, they tend to treat fundamentalism as a cognitive reality, or simply as experiential and expressive. That is to say, authors like Barr appear to read fundamentalism primarily in terms of its propositions, which allows him to conclude that fundamentalists are at best simplistic and at worst anti-intellectual. But this fails to take account of the fact that a fundamentalist orientation is a complex, systematic world-view in its own right. Fundamentalism is a way of relating, not just thinking. The work of Kathleen Boone goes some way to correcting the emphasis of Barr, but

still reads fundamentalist discourse with an experiential-expressive template in mind. That is to say, attention to the expression of discourse alone is insufficient for pursuing an understanding of, say, the way in which authority is mediated and understood in fundamentalist communities, which her own work aims at.

All the critiques discussed, in general, fail to perceive that fundamentalism as a distinctive theological tradition and culture in its own right, with an accompanying, appropriate discourse and method (or rhetoric). Such a complex system requires a systematic response, if it is to be respectfully engaged with and understood. The critiques also fail to deliver a working definition of fundamentalism. Those that are available are either too narrow, too broad, or too perjorative. A good definition is needed that is accurate, conceptually sound and properly descriptive. There is also a failure too, to hunt out the deeper impulses that drive the fundamentalist tradition. Too many works address the surface or expressive aspects of the tradition, critiquing the symptoms, but not attempting to locate the cause. So, the scale of the basic systematic problem before us is considerable. We shall be attempting to understand and interpret the constructive theology and ecclesiology of contemporary fundamentalism, but employing a methodology that is empathetic to the tradition, yet provides a coherent, systematic account, from which a critique might follow. This procedure must therefore begin by working towards a more technical definition of what fundamentalism actually is.

b. Fundamentalism. Clarifying Definitions of the Term

A number of scholars have argued that the term 'fundamentalism' is now so broad as to be useless.[1] So many groups are now labelled as 'fundamentalist', that the concept has indeed become somewhat 'spongy', and is in need of re-definition. Conventionally, the word has usually been employed in reference to individuals or organisations that operate by 'strict adherence to traditional orthodox tenets (e.g. the literal inerrancy of scripture) held to be fundamental to the Christian faith', as well as 'being opposed to liberalism and modernism'.[2] Whilst this definition tells us something about part of the nature of the fundamentalism, it does not go far enough. Fundamentalism is not just a set of constructive propositions designed to oppose modernist thinking, and advance what is held to be original orthodoxy. It is a relational phenomenon too, a way of being in the world, offering a social and mythic construction of reality for participants that offers a secure identity along with personal and corporate value.

Following this, Church historian Martin Marty has characterised fundamentalism as 'a worldwide reaction against many of the mixed offerings of modernity', appealing to those who look for 'authoritarian solutions' in relational problems.[3] He notes that differing fundamentalist groups are often deeply hostile to each other, even if there is a measure of broad agreement on the nature and location of fundamental articles of faith. Marty's explanation for this is that fundamentalism appeals to a particular class and personality type. Indeed, he sees the actual fundamentals themselves as a smoke screen, and goes so far as to state that fundamentalists are not so much motivated by religious belief as by psychological disposition, social forces and historical circumstance. Noting that Catholic, Jewish, Christian and Islamic fundamentalists all share the same mindset, he states:

> It is not productive to dwell on fundamentalist theology and point out its contradictions and errors. The [fundamentals] ... are merely tools, excuses or alibis for the fundamentalist mindset. Without the mindset, the doctrines wither.[4]

Marty's observations are useful, yet he himself still tends to treat fundamentalism as though it were a unified phenomenon, its many adherents believing roughly the same thing, behaving essentially in the same way. This is extremely problematic, since if we analyse how fundamentalists define and describe themselves, a wide polarity of views quickly begins to surface. These defensive clarifications of fundamentalism in fact, only serve to underline the scale of our systematic problem.

For example, many self-defined fundamentalists believe the charismatic (or Pentecostal) movement is, at best, contrary to the will of God: 'On the basis of Scriptural evidence we have concluded that ... the modern tongues movement is not of God'. Meanwhile, Pat Robertson, another self-confessed fundamentalist, points out in his The Fundamentalist Phenomenon that the 'Pentecostal-charismatic movement ... is based upon the fundamentalist doctrinal foundation.'[5] Other fundamentalists deny the right of people like Billy Graham to own the title 'fundamentalist' - he is too liberal, they claim, and cooperates with Roman Catholics.[6] J.I. Packer, author of Fundamentalism and the Word of God (1958) would disagree however. Although uneasy about the term 'fundamentalist', he nevertheless, as an evangelical, concludes that evangelical doctrine is fundamentalist, and the term 'fundamentalist' pervades most apologetic work done by self-confessed evangelicals, anxious to distinguish themselves from some fundamentalists, whilst wanting to own some fundamentalist doctrine. It is difficult to see, for example, what upsets them most about James Barr's Fundamentalism (1978) - his critique, or his terminology? Carl F.H. Henry conducts a sustained attack on Barr in volume 4 of his God Revelation and Authority (1979). He questions Barr's 'broad and tireless use of the term fundamentalism', but then warns his readers not to reject evangelicalism, which affirms 'the literal truth of an inerrant Bible'.[7]

I have pursued this question of terminology here because it is an acute difficulty for many of its subjects, and with good reason. Fundamentalist attitudes can be found in a wide variety of individuals and communities, and few wish to own a title with such pejorative connotations. Yet from our brief survey so far, the term 'fundamentalism' can at least be

used to describe a set of common social, theological and ecclesiological outlooks, shared between traditional fundamentalists (i.e., anti-Pentecostal), some evangelicals, and those from the charismatic movement or Pentecostalism. Given this, I shall now advance a more specific definition.

Firstly, contemporary fundamentalism is a 'backward-looking legitimation' for present forms of ministry and belief.[8] Present patterns of operation are justified in legalist and historicist fashions via a claim on an exclusive validity for one line (or a very small core) of development from Scripture, that refuses to recognise the diversity and development of others. In other words, an absolute authority must be established. This in turn affords participants a viable perception of reality in the modern world, a template through which experience can be processed. Some of these experiences themselves - as in the case of charismatics or Pentecostals - can then become actual fundaments, although the validating line of interpretation - usually an interpretation of a text or texts, or possibly a written creed or articles of faith - often remains the supreme authority. This backward looking legitimation is subsequently represented by a myth or constellation of myths that are 'at home' in the modern age. The metaphor 'home' is not meant to connote an impression of happiness or comfort. Instead, it suggests that these mythic constructs provide a perception of reality that is more usually opposed to many aspects of Western culture. It is 'at home' however, because it eclectically 'maps' traditional Christian mythologies and symbols on to the modern situation, thus forming a basic comprehensive cognitive picture of how the world is, how it should be, and how it will be. This cognitive picture is comprehensive enough to influence, amongst other things, family life, the role of women, attitudes to politics, other faiths, ethics and questions about life after death.

Secondly, fundamentalism is dialectical: it exists in relation to and opposition to trends in society that it perceives as modernist (i.e. where the authority of the existing tradition is challenged), pluralist (i.e. the dissipation of "Common beliefs" and moral values related to religion, giving rise to competition in society between competing convictions; what

was once implicit must now become explicit in order to survive), or compromised. Thus, it is programmatic; it aims at reversing certain traits and establishing a new type of order or perceptions of reality. This is most commonly expressed in the controlling symbol of 'Holy War' that is variously employed. It is a primary perceptual and conceptual lens through which the past, present and future is processed. Fundamentalists see their enterprise as a struggle, in which the order they seek to advance must overcome the present (ungodly) order. The trends of modernity that fundamentalists oppose are to be resisted precisely because they represent a threat to the authority that they place themselves under. Therefore, we can speak of fundamentlism being non-dialogical. It has nothing to receive from the world, since the world must receive them first, wholesale. Some sociologists of religion (such as Bryan Wilson) identify this phenomenon as sectarianism, which is usually quite correct. However, caution needs to be exercised in using that word, since it might indicate that fundamentalists were somehow retreating from the world. In fact the opposite is true; they are engaging with it most forcefully, yet with a faith that is committed to a type of monologueism that arises out of their authoritarian dogma.

Thirdly, although fundamentalism now enjoys considerable breadth of expression, including its own competing sectarian factions that deny each other the right to own the title, I nevertheless hold that there is a traceable phenomenon that we can call 'fundamentalism'. By viewing it as a tendency, a habit of mind, rather than a single movement or body, it is possible to discern a phenomenon that is widespread, yet with common features. It is an attitude, sometimes selective on subjects (e.g. sexuality) and found within traditions that are otherwise quite catholic or plural. These features generally include a hostile reaction to the mixed offerings of modernity, and to combat it, a set of 'fundamentals', such as a 'core doctrine', an absolute source of authority, a specific programme that is to be imposed rather than shared, clear patterns for mediating authority and power, and authenticating procedures (e.g. 'Have you been born again?') that validate and recognise existing members and potential recruits.

Fourthly, fundamentalism, like liberalism, is not just a theological perspective localised to a particular denomination, (or even religion, although in this thesis I am only concerned with Christian fundamentalism). It is a transdenominational phenomenon that denotes standpoints, attitudes, patters on behaviour and theological methods. Although it has its origins in the emerging evangelicalism of the 18th Century and in the 'historic fundamentalism' of the early twentieth century, it is a diverse socio-theological movement. It understands itself to be concerned with upholding certain doctrines of the Christian faith that they regard as essential to authentic Christianity. As with the fundamentalism of the early twentieth century, contemporary fundamentalism's chief nemesis is theological and ethical liberalism, which it opposes in varying degrees. In fact, what distinguises fundamentalism from other similar faith perspectives is its opposition to liberalism. where opposition to liberalism is lacking, I hold that one cannot speak of true fundamentalism, but only of an analogue or close relative. At first sight, this might appear to rule out many charismatic or Pentecostal groups, but not so. These groups are just as anti-liberal; they simply construct their remedial programme differently. A good example of this is the British Evangelical Alliance, an unbrella organisation incorporating many different fundamentalist groups from different denominations, in order to bring a greater degree of pressure to bear on certain issues.[9]

Fifth and last, fundamentalism is a cultural-linguistic phenomenon.[10] Too many of the studies discussed regard fundamentalism as a primarily noetic phenomenon, concerned with certain beliefs and doctrines, and propagating informational propositions. We have already noted this problematic aspect in Barr's treatment of fundamentalism, namely his habit of treating fundamentalism as a (primarily) credal phenomenon. For example, the doctrine of inerrancy does not just exist to counter the excesses of form-criticism and Darwinist ideas about the origin of man. It is more subtle than that. The cognitive approach does not do justice to the rich intricacy of the fundamentalist universe; it fails to attend to how a doctrine like inerrancy helps constitute a habit of mind, viable perceptions of reality, in short, a whole world. Stories also help constitute communities, not just propositions; it is often the group's own

narrative that shapes its theology, as for example, in the case of fundamentalist Afrikaaners.

Equally, fundamentalism cannot be regarded as just a matter of expressing experience. There is more to fundamentalism than a primordial religious experience, which when articulated becomes thematized into a type of determinate 'mystical' language. For example, Methodists do not all seek to have their hearts 'strangely warmed' as Wesley did. It is the telling of the story, with its message of immanent change, the hope of transformation, and the renewal of inner being that helps place that story centrally in the Methodist tradition. The point of expressing experience belongs in a wider context. Thus, I hold that fundamentalism must be read as a comprehensive interpretative schema, employing myths or narratives that structure human experience and understanding of the self and the world.[1] This view recognises the power of language to shape, mould and delimit human experience, to the extent that it may be said that the way language itself is used can give rise to certain experiences. If fundamentalism can be seen as a cultural-linguistic system, the operating scaffold of symbolism within can be shown to be part of the idiom that describes realities, formulates beliefs and the experiencing of inner attitudes, feelings and sentiments: in short, a complete interpretative framework. Like a culture or language, fundamentalism as a tendency is a communal phenomenon that shapes the subjectives of individuals and the objectives of communities, rather than being a manifestation of them. It comprises a vocabulary of discursive and non-discursive symbols, together with a distinctive logic or grammar in terms of which this vocabulary can be deployed. It is a form of life, with cognitive and behavioural dimensions, its doctrines, cosmic understandings, myths and ethics relating to the rituals practices, the sentiments and experiences evoked, the actions recommended, and the subsequent institutional form that develops. All this is suggested in comparing fundamentalism to a 'cultural-linguistic system'.

With these five qualifying hallmarks in mind, I am conscious that the definition of fundamentalism proposed in this thesis is quite broad. Indeed, much of what could be described as Christianity fits the description I advance. but this does not invalidate the definition. Much of Christianity is organised around fundamental articles or excluding creeds, and many scholars have affirmed that Christianity has been a form of fundamentalism for much of its history. So, is there anything that separates fundamentalism from 'ordinary' Christianity, that simply organises itself around a set of fundamentals? I would suggest there is, with the difference locating itself in a variety of arenas, of which I single out just two (more will be said about these in our conclusion). Firstly, the fundamentals are held differently: doctrines tend to be 'tight', rigorously defined, and used as a controlling mechanism within for the establishment of ecclesial order. The doctrine of an inerrant Bible is a clear example, being a symbolic reminder of the closed and complete revelation that orchestrates relationships and doctrine. In contrast, non-fundamentalists generally recognise that their faith and 'knowledge is incomplete' (1 Cor. 13.9), resulting in a commitment to dialogue and openness rather than monologue. Secondly, and linked to this, is the question over the nature of truth Fundamentalists deny the ambiguity or contradiction of truth, seeking to press for a uniformity of truth that will effectively govern life Truth, and the homogenous groups resulting from interaction with it, emerges as an exclusive concept, with no space for error, non-aligned interpretation or appropriate ambiguity [12] Non-fundamentalist Christians acknowledge the necessity of contradiction in truth, which generally gives rise to a higher degree of tolerance for plurality of truth-expression [13] So, there is a clear difference between fundamentalism and other forms of Christianity that might be organising their theology and ecclesiology around a group of fundamentals

So, to summarise briefly This thesis proposes to work with a definition of fundamentalism that recognises it as: (i) a backward looking legitimation for present practice, (ii) dialectical, existing in opposition to certain modernist, liberal or pluralist trends, yet non-dialogically, (iii) a tendency in individuals and institutions, with certain common features, such as an 'inerrant core doctrine', (iv) a transdenominational

phenomenon, with its own theological method, standpoints and attitudes, and (v) a 'cultural-linguistic system', that provides a complete 'world' in which individuals or institutions may live, magnify their identity and process their cosmos experience. Given this, we may now introduce our case-study and proposed methodology.

c. Selection of Case Study, Texts and Methodology

The methodology to be employed in this thesis is dependent on having an appropriate case-study as the subject of analysis. If fundamentalism is to be understood and critiqued afresh from a systematic standpoint, then the choice of case-study is of real significance. I have chosen to engage systematically with the work and works of John Wimber, a preeminent fundamentalist of the late twentieth century still living and practising his ministry. One person as a case-study has been preferred to a group, largely because of the breadth and depth of Wimber's writings and activities. It was also felt that a focus on one individual might help in avoiding Barr's rather selective analysis of fundamentalism, that at times seemed to focus on extremes and abberations within the movement itself. However, the methodology employed and the conclusions that this thesis will draw should have implications for the study of other fundamentalists.

John Wimber has been chosen as the case-study for a variety of reasons Firstly, although an American converted via a fundamentalist-evangelcal tradition, he now enjoys international and transdenominational appeal. In particular, he has achieved recognition outside the United States of America in Britain, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. In the United Kingdom, he has strongly influenced significant portions of the Anglican Church since 1980, largely through his association with Canon David Watson (now deceased)[1], and latterly, The Right Reverend David Pytches, formerly Bishop of Chile. Since the mid-1980's, his involvement with British Christians has steadily extended, and now includes a 'network' of many denominations, including what are commonly known as 'House Churches'.[2] Since 1988, Wimber has been establishing his own Churches in the UK (called 'Vineyards'), and has also associated himself in leadership with churches and Christian leaders who aspire to the particular form of Christianity he espouses Worldwide, Wimber supervises over five hundred churches.

Secondly, Wimber is a good 'fit' as a fundamentalist with the criteria proposed in the preceeding section; his credentials as such, will emerge in

more detail as the thesis progresses He is dependent, like many fundamentalists, on backward looking legitimation for his present practice. The locus of legitimation itself lies in the doctrine of scriptural inerrancy, which Wimber affirms: traditional fundamentalist belief and practice is deeply embedded in the geology of Wimber's ministry, via his original Evangelicalism.[3] Wimber is constantly looking to scripture for endorsement of his ministry, seeing this as the unalterable yardstick by which he and his followers must be measured. Yet he is actually much broader in his choice of fundamentals, being a fundamentalist in the 'revivalist' tradition. Part of what makes Wimber such a fascinating case--study is his twin reliance on cognitive and experiental fundaments Wimber's fundamentalism does not just depend on a few articles of faith, but on his followers actually experiencing and promulgating 'signs' of God's presence, as co-equal fundaments for his church In fact, we may say that Wimber is a good example of a sophisticated fundamentalist He is seldom crude, though often over-simplistic. The selection of a complex fundamentalist 'fits' with my contention that fundamentalism as a phenomenon cannot be reduced to a few basic issues

Thirdly, Wimber's fundamentalism is a tendency, functioning programmatically. Wimber has a greater range of fundamentals than some other fundamentalists, but he owns them and deploys them in the same sort of way. He seeks the spiritual renewal of the church, involving the acceptance and propagation of a whole host of phenomena that have come to be associated with contemporary charismatic renewal: 'spiritual gifts', 'signs and wonders', healing, prophecy, deliverance, speaking in tongues, and so forth.[4] Wimber is thus engaged in his own particular 'Holy War' (against weak, powerless or 'dead' churches that do not prioritise the mandate in Mark 16: 15 - 18), although it is often constructed in highly mythic terms, consisting, as we shall see later, of demons, powers and principalities and other phenomena that must be engaged with and opposed. He is non-dialogical in orientation, regarding engagement with critics as a waste of energy and resources.[5] Lastly, Wimber's particular theological methods, with their tactile emphasis, form the basis of his social organisation in all its distinctiveness, as well as characterising his opposition to other belief-systems. The exegesis of his work and works

will highlight how this form of fundamentalism offers a complete interpretative schema for participants in which their understanding of God, the self and world is formed through the words that are used and the experiences and behaviour that are valued

All of Wimber's published works have been considered in this thesis. A prodigious writer and speaker, he has produced a large number of 'courses' for his followers, which generally consist of a written manual, with recorded audio cassette-tapes of him speaking. The subjects covered include healing, prophecy, deliverance, 'spiritual warfare', the 'End Times', evangelism and church growth. He has contributed to a number of books that touch on issues central to his concerns, and has written himself: Power Evangelism (1984), Power Healing (1985) and Power Points. The Dynamics of Spiritual Growth (1990).[6] He is also editor-in-chief of his own magazine, which runs under the title Equipping the Saints, and is internationally available. Around this corpus of material lies an even larger belt of commentary, apologia and occasional critique. Many of Wimber's more notable followers (e.g. Bishop David Pytches, Professor Peter Wagner, Fuller Theological Seminary, etc.) write in favour of the principles that he advocates, and actively support him. Some books bear testimony to the success-claims of Wimber's ideas and ministry, such as Riders of the Third Wave (1987) and Some said it Thundered (1990). Perhaps inevitably, there are some fundamentalists who dislike Wimber's particular style and emphasis, and a small number have written critiques.[7] (There are no serious theological or sociological critiques that I know of).

In addition to considering the published works of Wimber, the author has also been to his conferences in England and Scotland, as an observer. What was seeen and heard will also inform the subsequent critique. Because fundamentalism is not just propositional, but also a matter of conduct, it seemed important to experience first-hand how Wimber and his followers operated in their preferred context. So, the scope of the thesis is limited largely to texts and tapes by or about Wimber, although personal experience does help form some of the views expressed. The scope of the thesis as such, has dictated the preferred methodology.

The methodology chosen to deal with Wimber as a case-study has had to take serious account of the difficulty of analysing such a diverse phenomenon as fundamentalism. The methodology itself had to conform to certain requirements, and show at a deeper level than is usual for studies such as this how certain fundaments actually operated, and why. It is already recognised that fundaments are mediational in character, providing an ontological structure for participants. But fundaments are also in place to communicate the proponent's truth about God, or the truth of God. They function too, as mechanisms for ecclesial bonding, providing ground on which people might meet, agree and forge deeper relationships. They also serve to regulate and stabilise individual and community life, usually via making and accepting 'normative' statements of faith. Yet the methodology not only has to deal with that: it must be dynamic enough to assess the criteria that develop within fundamentalist groups that judge the quality of fundaments Clearly, any criteria in use in such groups must walk a tightrope between the boundaries of fundaments and their direction. Fundamentalism is not a static thing· it moves forward as its people grow, develop and encounter what is new. Yet it also appeals to core, unchanging boundaries. However, the movement and development of a fundamentalist group does not usually destroy its boundaries, and vice versa. So, what is required is a methodology that will encounter fundamentalism in all its dynamism, comprehend it, and then critique it

This thesis approaches the problem of interpreting Wimber's constructive theology by using a key which has not been tried before - that of treating seriously the language, concepts and manifestations of power which permeate all of Wimber's work and works. The use of the work 'key' however, can only be a loose metaphor: Wimber's work, like that of so many other fundamentalists, is complex and multi-layered, and to suggest that there is only one principle of coherence is unfair. However, it is my contention that interpreting Wimber via this theme will offer significant vantage points, from which other forms of fundamentalism might be assessed in the future.

Because Wimber never wrote a 'dogmatics', nor indeed, ever explicitly addresses the nature of human power, the methodology chosen for assessment

must be one that fully interrogates texts, concepts and phenomena for power-related features that might be subliminal. Therefore, the method chosen could be termed 'heuristic': examining the work and works of Wimber systematically, for features that are not necessarity explicitly declared. (This is not methodological serendipity') It could be termed a 'phenomenology' (though not in the same way that was discussed in section 1 a. (iv)), or expressed in the sequence 'sift - collate - interpret'. One began by noting and recording each use of power-related words and phrases, with some analysis of the context and weight of each statement. However, the proceedings could not just be confined to a word study, since Wimber often employs power concepts where no explicit power language is used, and the power-related phenomena would be largely left untouched. Nevertheless, once a book or course had been examined in this way, the analysis proceeded to see if any of the scattered 'threads' formed any pattern. Clear patters did emerge from the first book analysed, which, with modifications, held good for subsequent works. The final product is more than a 'reading' (to use the jargon of literary criticism), and is also an attempt to get beyond a form of descriptive taxonomy of ideas and phenomena that can be used prescriptively. Such an exercise might risk only permitting us discussion of the direction in which certain ideas might lead if taken to their logical conclusion. The heuristic methodology is more than this, being in a way a type of ontology, a search for the very structure of 'being' (or 'ontological commitment') that functions at the very heart of all ecclesial communities In assessing Wimber heuristically, the methodology employed is attempting to show a number of things: (i) the (latent) consistency of Wimber's fundamental beliefs that interpret existence, God and the world, (ii) how people commit themselves by the terms they use to accept certain kinds of phenomena, and (iii) the social and theological effects of 'power' in the message and method. This is the 'sift - collate - interpret' strategy, or heuristic methodology.

The fact of the power-related consistency is held to be a matter of real significance, rather than just an artefact of the method of enquiry. (Even a cursory glance at the titles of his works shows this to be the case) The common threads and patterns in Wimber's thoughts and actions that present themselves can then be organised and then evaluated, with some

conclusions being drawn. Procedurally, the thesis first of all lets Wimber speak and act for himself, although with some notion that 'power' is a major concern of his. With this done, insights from the social sciences are introduced and used in the collating process, as a way of organising the diverse use of power-words, concepts and phenomena. The interpretative part of the thesis arises from reflection on the theological and ecclesiological issues involved. This 'reflection' looks at, amongst other things, the location of power in Wimber's theology and communities, the conflation of divine and human power, often via the use of an agent (such as personal charisma, or a 'charismatic situation'), the agencies of power themselves, and their effectiveness at a variety of levels. In the heuristic strategy so described, the result of the labour of this thesis is to engage empathetically with, show how and to critique, one type of fundamentalist community that attempts to solve its cosmological, ideological and theological problems in the face of modernity and pluralism, by reference to a complex power-paradigm.

d. John Wimber - A Fundamentalist in the Revival Tradition:
A Brief Biography

John Wimber was born in the American midwest in 1934. His father left home after he was born, and his mother brought him up alone until the age of seven, when she married again. With the absence of a father in his early childhood, Wimber's grandfather - a horse trainer - played an important part in his early life. He often refers to him affectionately in his addresses and books. No-one in Wimber's family was a Christian, so there was little 'church background' in his formative years. He was, as he says, 'a fourth generation unbeliever'. The family moved to Orange County, California, in 1946, and Wimber began to learn the saxophone at school, and then several other instruments. From his teenage years he was a member of various local jazz bands, and shortly after leaving school he became a professional musician, teaching, directing, playing and orchestrating a wide variety of music. His career in the music industry reached a peak when he helped form a 'pop' group in Las Vegas, known as 'The Righteous Brothers', who subsequently became internationally renowned. In 1955 Wimber married Carol, a non-practising Roman Catholic, in a Baptist ceremony; but after a few yers the marriage began to falter. In 1962, the couple separated, shortly before the birth of their third child

It is at this point that Wimber believes his awakening to Christianity began After a period of utter desolation following his separation from Carol, Wimber began to pray.' In due time, Carol and he were reconciled, and they subsequently decided to have their marriage blessed in a Roman Catholic church, as a way of marking their fresh start. Shortly after this, they came into contact with two friends who had recently been 'born again'. The Wimbers were impressed with how they had been converted to the Christian faith, by the change that had taken place, and the quality of life their friends now enjoyed. In 1962, Wimber and his wife joined a 'home group' affiliated to an Evangelical Quaker church, led by a man known as 'Gunner' Payne. Wimber was particularly impressed by how Payne lived out his Christian life, especially in his workplace (he owned a welding

shop). 'Here was a man, I thought at the time, whose life demanded that I listen to his words.'[2]

John and Carol Wimber were both converted in 1963, and joined the Yorba Linda Friends' Church, an independent evangelical church in the Quaker tradition Wimber gradually withdrew from the musical industry, and devoted himself to Christian work, funded by part-time work he did in a factory. The church at Yorba Linda was 'anti-charismatic', and Wimber accepted this stance unquestioningly up until the early 1970's. Between 1970 and 1973, Wimber took a degree in Biblical Studies at Azusa Pacific Bible College, during which time he was recorded (ordained) as co-pastor at Yorba Linda, where he served until 1975.

In 1975, Wimber terminated his employment at Yorba Linda, and joined Professor C. Peter Wagner in the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary. Wagner had met Wimber in 1974, and had been impressed by Wimber's 'natural skills as a salesman and business executive ... transformed ... into the spiritual gifts of an evangelist.'[3] Wimber was invited to become a founding director of the 'Charles Fuller Institute for Evangelism and Church Growth'. True enough, Wimber had been a succesful evangelist, but the invitation to join the staff at Fuller Theological Seminary offered a deeper challenge.

Behind the principles of Church growth lay the work of Donald McGavran[4], a former Dean Emeritus at the School of World Mission McGavran had worked as a missionary in India after the second world war, and had subsequently propagated some radical views about missionary work, culminating in the publication of his major work, Understanding Church Growth (1970).[5] Amongst the more radical ideas was the concept of 'homogenous units' of people as being a key to numerical church growth. Christianity could spread more easily via church-planting, provided that each church operated around its 'target' audience. For example, in India, a different church for each caste in a given community would be more numerically productive than one church for all castes.

Peter Wagner was very much a disciple of McGavran, and was keen to integrate McGavran's ideas into North American evangelical church life. Wagner's enterprise however, was coloured by his own missionary experience in South America, where he had obseved the explosive growth of Protestant Pentecostalism (or 'charismatic renewal'). Wagner was convinced that church growth principles needed to embrace the insights and phenomena of charismatic renewal, if an impression was to be made on North American church life As Wimber began to teach church growth principles himself at Fuller, the students - often missionaries on furlough - confirmed that charismatic renewal was a major factor in the numerical growth of churches, especially in the third world. Wimber began to revise his ideas about about Pentecostal churches and 'charismatics', but remained outside the movement himself until his wife drew him in Carol, after receiving the gift of 'speaking in tongues', organised a prayer group in their house, which centred on people sharing and receiving the experience of 'baptism in the Spirit'. John was reluctant to attend, but when he eventually did so, found himself caught up in a new world. Being in a new world meant leaving the old, Yorba Linda Church were not sympathetic to charismatic renewal, and the group were no longer welcomed to the church. This left the charismatic group without a leader or a church, so the group invited Wimber to become their pastor. After some hesitation, Wimber resigned from Fuller, and accepted pastoral responsibility for the forty people who met in his home.

Wimber's church met under the new name of 'Calvary Chapel of Yorba Linda', and associated itself with Chuck Smith's charismatic-fundamentalist Calvary Chapel Fellowship. This was significant, since the Calvary Chapels had arisen out of the Californian 'Jesus People' Movement of the 1970's, which had attracted many young people via its appeal to contemporary trends, especially in music. Wimber's engagement with Pentecostal or 'renewal theology' was fostered in this new environment, assisted by exposure to 'Jesus People'. Conversations with Russell Spittler and Peter Wagner were ongoing, and Wimber read amongst others, the works of George Eldon Ladd. Wimber's new church grew numerically, transferring to the gymnasium of Canyon High School in 1978. To all appearances at the time, Wimber's church must have looked typical of many independent evangelical

churches: an inerrant view of scripture forming the basis for ministry, mission, ethics and personal holiness. Except that the worship Wimber used was different, reflecting his own background in 'soft rock' music, giving the worship a very 'contemporary feel', as the original Calvary Chapel had done ten or more years before.

A key turning point in Wimber's ministry arose out of the healing of one of his congregation. Wimber had struggled with the misistry of healing for some time, but had felt it appropriate to continue practising in spite of persistent failure. When a woman with fever was eventually healed after prayer, this encouraged Wimber and his congregation to promote the ministry more visibly, largely through the 'Kinship Groups' which Wimber and his associates had organised to meet in the week. This activity was followed in 1981 by an extraordinary experience of corporate renewal for the church:

> On the evening of Mother's Day a young man who had been attending the church gave a testimony and asked those under twenty-five to come forward. He then invoked the Holy Spirit [with the words 'Come, Holy Spirit'] and the young people - about 400 of them - fell to the floor, weeping, wailing and speaking in tongues [5]

Wimber had never seen anything like this before, and was clearly, from his account of the incident, much exercised by the events. However a 'word of knowledge', via a pastor colleague from Denver, confirmed that it was God at work, alleviating Wimber's anxieties. Effectively, a form of revival had broken out. Wimber and his congregation reckoned that if the Holy Spirit was invoked, signs and wonders would follow, and this appears to have been their early experience. Their church grew numerically, and began to attract visitors from overseas, including Canon David Wason, who brought news of Wimber back to England.

The explosive growth Wimber's church was now experiencing prompted Peter Wagner to invite Wimber to share his insights at Fuller School of World Mission. (Wimber had continued lecturing at Fuller on the Doctor of Ministry Course since 1975). A new course was devised, entitled 'Signs, Wonders and Church Growth', which explored the relationship between numerical church growth and charismata, and signs associated with the

dramatic outpouring of the Holy Spirit The syllabus introduction, penned by Wimber, explains it:

> When God appears in the midst of a group of people who are yielding themselves to him and waiting for his visitation, he generally does what he does best ... the unusual, the unexpected, the supernatural ... We all 'know' God is sovereign and as such is completely free of restraints. He is free to do as he chooses. Yet learning to live in close proximity to the God of the miraculous is a process ... Becoming intimately acquainted with the Holy Spirit is vital for those who desire to pray effectively for healing. If you have not yet experienced the empowering work of the Holy Spirit be advised that such an experience awaits you ... This promised empowering is essential for service in the realm of the Spirit ... This teaching is not for unbelievers or sceptics ... It is for believers who want to be helped beyond the limits of their own littleness of faith.[7]

This course - to be analysed in some detail later on - proved to be highly popular. A second course, entitled 'The Miraculous and Church Growth' (course MC510) was put on, with an even greater emphasis on practising. lectures would often include demonstrations of healing, deliverance and words of knowledge for participants. Wimber termed this a 'clinic' (of the Holy Spirit), a familiar metaphor that had been used by John Alexander Dowie and other Pentecostal healers nearly a hundred years before. This attracted much interest in evangelical-charismatic circles in the USA, to the extent that Robert Walker, editor of the influential Christian Life magazine flew to California on a fact-finding trip, and subsequently devoted a whole issue to the 'Wimber phenomenon'; the magazine sold-out, and was reprinted as a book Robert Meye, Dean of Fuller Seminary observed· 'I know of only two seminary courses that have become famous, one was the course on dogmatics taught at Basel by Karl Barth and the other is MC510 taught by John Wimber here at Fuller'.[8] However, in spite of the popularity of the course it also proved to be controversial, especially with Fuller's non-charismatic staff and students. In 1985, the course was restructured under the tutorship of Professors Charles Kraft and Peter Wagner, with Wimber now only having some minor participation in the output. However, Wimber continues to teach the principles he advocated in the original courses.

In 1983, Wimber transferred his church affiliation from the Calvary Chapel network, and joined a group of six churches called 'Vineyards', led by Ken Gulliksen. The transfer of affiliation was virtually coincidental with one of Wimber's most productive periods of numerical church growth In the same year Wimber's church numbered about 5,000 members, and had relocated to a large warehouse at Anaheim. Vineyard Ministries International was set up as an umbrella organisation to oversee Wimber's increasingly hectic programme of courses and seminars being conducted worldwide. Wimber began an 'aggressive church-planting' effort, which in the Summer of 1991 numbered 500 churches, including 190 churches in the Amazon Basin, South America. These churches are made up of people of all ages However, we must note that those in America and Europe tend to attract large numbers from the '18 - 30 something' age range. Like the Jesus Movement of the 1960's and 70's, it is the vigorous, young-at-heart person who will find a home in their local Vineyard [9]

Wimber's career development as a revivalist, healer and speaker since the mid-1980's has blossomed, though it has not been without its areas of controversy. His deployment of prophets (the 'Kansas Six', to be discussed later) has split support for his ministry in Britain. Some of his closest followers have been dismissed for sexual impropriety, and there are some rumours of financial misconduct.[10] In spite of this though, he remains an enduring, substantially influential figure in the world-wide evangelical-charismatic scene. He has managed to maintain his international and transdenominational appeal - in spite of spawning his own network of churches - through a combination of charisma, charm and a dependable ability to demonstrate 'signs and wonders' wherever he goes

Historically speaking, Wimber's biography does not differ in character from many key fundamentalist-Pentecostal figures before the post-war period and beyond. Comparisons to Charles Parham (1873 - 1929), John Dowie (1847 - 1907) and the early ministry of William Branham (1909 - 1965) can be made. Historical preoccupation with divine healing in the USA is itself traceable to George Fox and the Quakers, (Wimber's original denomination), who recorded signs of God's power amongst them in a 'Book of Miracles' [11] Theologically, Wimber's commitment to a conservative evangelical theology

is unquestioned. There is no debate on biblical authority to be heard in Vineyard churches: Wimber and his followers are affirmers of inerrancy. There is no question that lost souls need saving from hell: evangelism and church-planting are major priorities. Wimber's credentials as a fundamentalist in the revival tradition are indisputable. He seeks the dynamic renewal of the Church via obedience to an inerrant Scripture, and an insistence on an intimate transformative encounter with God through the power of the Holy Spirit. This implies, as we have noted before, that Wimber has a greater range of fundamentals than some other fundamentalists, which is correct.[12] This does not mean he is not a fundamentalist: what links fundamentalists together as a distinctive faith tradition is not an agreement on the nature of the fundamentals themselves, but rather how they hold and behave with their beliefs, and act towards those who do not possess them Fundamentalism is a pervasive tendency that inhabits many faith communities, but most especially those that are sectarian in nature. So, given this brief biography, it is now appropriate to focus on the ways in which power might become a principle of coherence for interpreting our subject.

e Power as a Principle of Coherence for the Interpretation of Wimber

One of the ways in which fundamentalist tendencies can be assessed is to enquire into how a community perceives the power of God, receives it and then deploys it. We have already noted that fundamentalism is a 'cultural-linguistic' phenomenon, in which behaviour, language and cosmos experience are intricately linked. But how is power a cohesive element in a given fundamentalist community? It is not always easy to see, but the following illustration may throw some light on the matter. For some fundamentalists - some work done by Inter Varsity Press authors, or the British-based Proclamation Trust might be examples - the power of God is perceived to lie mainly in the text of Scripture, to which God is deemed to have committed himself in order to preeminently express his self-communication. Guarantees of God's past activity in creation and redemption, and of a future judgement, all of which are forms of power themselves, are guarded in an unalterable inerrant canon that is the indisputable power-vehicle for these other forms of power to become active in the life of the community. So, God is perceived to have invested his power in the transformative capacity of words, and consequently, the community receive God via his words: symbol, sacrament or mystical experience are eschewed, since they threaten the autonomous power of words alone. The fundamentalist community therefore posits most of its energy into understanding the word, living under its authority, and spreading it abroad, as a means of demonstrating and sharing God's power. Consequently, the ecclesiological makeup of such communities often revolves around preaching, Bible expositions, biblical studies and commentaries. Because the power of God lies in 'the word' and its capacity to transform, save and convict, members of such communities constantly measure themselves against texts, in order to gauge how much of (the power) of God they have understood and received

Now, it is not my intention to debate with constructions such as these here. The example only serves to show that most forms of fundamentalism are attempts to organise a culture around a given community's sense of where the locus of God's fundamental or primary given power might lie. For

Wimber, our case-study, the location of power is different. True enough, he does contend that God has powerfully revealed himself in an inerrant canon. But on its own, this is too abstract for Wimber. Where he parts company with his Evangelical-Quaker roots is in his insistence that the power of God is by nature a visible, tactile phenomenon. God reveals himself in signs, wonders, healings, miracles and church growth Just as some fundamentalists limit the primary power of God to texts, thereby excluding other options, so Wimber locates God's power in apparent constructive activity, thus also excluding certain avenues in which God's power might be manifest. For example, although Wimber asserts that God is free and unconstrained, his view of God's power would not permit him to see God revealing himself (equally) in failure, sickness or powerlessness

Even the most cursory glance at Wimber's books and courses will impress the reader/listener with the frequency of the use of the word 'power', or words that might be associational, such as 'force' or 'energy'. At times the words are employed as literary devices, as when he describes the path to spiritual growth. 'experiences of God's truth .. boost us along ... catapult us towards maturity' [DSG, 5]. Also typical of Wimber are his own 'power stories' which appear scattered throughout his works, and are used to illustrate doctrine or practice, most notably in the ministries of healing and evangelism. 'Power metaphors' and symbols punctuate Wimber's worship materials, and the consequent rhetoric arising out of the worshipping community. 'Power concepts' also govern his understanding of Church history [PE, 151 - 174] and the present (primary) location of God's activity in the Church.' Most importantly for us however, is Wimber's constructive theology, which pursues a notion of God as an empowering transformer who creates, redeems and renews via the unequivocal disposal of power in various forms.

Of course on one level, such language is merely that of causal agency: were there no more to Wimber's power language, it would contribute little to the task of interpreting Wimber, and perhaps, of other fundamentalists But the power language does occur with unusual frequency, and at very significant points It soon becomes clear that the categories of power

emerge as central both to Wimber's analysis of God in Church history, and to his articulation of the Christian message.

In one of Wimber's earlies publications, Power Points: A Basic Primer for Christians (1981: eight audio-cassettes with a manual), he proposes a framework of belief and action that will empower the listener in their Christian life. The publication is made up of sermons delivered to the Vineyard at Yorba Linda between July and November 1981, and each of the eight discussions, covering topics such as prayer, baptism in the Spirit and spiritual warfare, can be said to adopt a threefold strategy: (i) identifying what powers are at work in the life of the Christian (e.g., exorcism), (ii) examining their assignment (e.g , victory), (iii) understanding their effect (e.g , new spiritual growth). Wimber thus expresses his early hermeneutical and historical method in terms of his understanding of the nature, directionality and results of the operation of various powers in the past and present. Proof that sensitivity to power factors habitually conditions Wimber's thinking may be found even when no explicit 'power' words are used The following passage - Wimber's summary of the place of 'signs and wonders' in the Church from Church Growth. State of the Art (1989) - illustrates the point. Wimber's words appear in normal script, with my commentary in square (i.e., [ ]) brackets.

> In Athens, he [Paul] had used persuasive words with meager results. At his next apostolic stop, Corinth, many believed. It appears that in Corinth Paul combined proclamation with demonstration, as Christ had done throughout his ministry What we are dealing with here is both content (proclamation) as well as context (the situation impregnated with God's mighty presence). The Word and works of God, coupled in an expression of divine will and mercy, culminate in the conversion of individuals and groups. [Paul's success as an evangelist is linked to his becomming a 'power agent': If his words are spoken in the 'context' of power, with the power demonstrated to the listeners, transformation will follow].
>
> I call this type of ministry that Paul had in Corinth power evangelism. a presentation of the Gospel that is rational but also transcends the rational. The explanation of the Gospel comes with a demonstration of God's power through signs and wonders. It is a spontaneous, Spirit-inspired, empowered presentation of the gospel. It is usually preceded and undergirded by supernatural demonstrations of God's presence. [A tactile sense of the power of God must accompany the witness of the Church].

> More than any other issue, it is the influence of materialism and anti-supernaturalism that inhibits westerners from experiencing evangelistic power as illustrated in the New Testament. [Suspension or subversion of conventional cultural rationality is desirable if the kind of power the early church knew is to be recovered] ... In our contemporary society people screen out the possibility of supernatural interaction with the natural. We refuse, for the most part, to even study or allow for the reality of supernatural activity in our day. [The natural or the ordinary is a 'block' to the supernatural, through which God works: sharp dualism. The power of the world has temporarily regained control of the Christian community, robbing it of its access to its empowering source]
>
> One of the indicators of the Messiahship of Jesus was the demonstration of God's power in his ministry ... He viewed His ministry from a different perspective. He saw it from a power demonstration point of view ... The early church was effective because it understood evangelism from this same perspective - power demonstrations' [The exercise of supernatural power was a proof that Jesus was the Christ. The success of the early church is brought about via its use of miracles in its mission]. (pp. 223 - 224)

This description of the signs and wonders ministry highlights the important stress Wimber gives to the relationship between words and works. Functionally, he sees words as potential vehicles of power to persuade and transform although it is the work (or demonstration) of power that holds his interest, primarily because the exercise of this power overturns the power of another. As he says in <u>The Kingdom of God</u> (1985):

> There is no difference between the <u>words</u> and <u>works</u> of Jesus The <u>Works</u> have exactly the same message as the <u>words</u>. The message and words concentrate on the announcement of the Kingdom of God The miracles and works show us what the Kingdom is like. The preaching and parables were verbal announcements of the impending arrival of the rule of God and destruction of Satan's rule ... The miracles were concrete parables. With his <u>works</u>, Jesus came and destroyed Satan's grip and ushered in the rule of God, restoring God's control over what Satan had seized (p. 41)

So for Wimber, the Kingom of God is a kingdom of power - annunciated, then practised - which overthrows the controlling power of Satan. Wimber alludes to several different kinds of power in his works, but one of his central themes is that there has been a shift of powers in the Church, a transpotentiation[2] of a kind, which has displaced the life of God in the

Church. The spiritual and the immediate have been subverted by the human and the institutional; words, often a product of rationality, have often been unaccompanied by deeds, programmes have replaced a reliance upon the Holy Spirit.[3]

This thesis argues that the ubiquitous power language of Wimber is of significance, and that concepts of power form the basic matrix of his thought. The recurring themes of God dynamically intervening in history, of movements fostering the charismata, of demonstrative signs and wonders being transformative, of conflicts between the forces of darkness and of light, are all power themes Wimber views the record of the ministry of Jesus as a clash and interplay between various powers, in which ultimately, the power of God is revealed. 'Signs and wonders' is a phrase that most students of fundamentalism would associate with Wimber, but it should be noted that it is used interchangeably with another phrase of Wimber's denoting the same: 'power encounter'. For Wimber,

> 'signs and wonders being manifested is <u>power encounter</u> ... a visible, practical demonstration that Jesus Christ is more powerful than the false god(s) or spirit(s) worshipped or feared by members of a people group. When these divinely appointed encounters occur, the church grows - although not on every occasion. Sometimes there are other mitigating factors which keep the church from growing, such as ... the negative backlash of power entities in the community who are threatened by God's display of power.[4]

One is justified in speaking of these motifs in Wimber in terms of power rather than simply dynamism or teleology for several reasons. The first is that they are the terms in which Wimber himself chooses to speak. The second is that behind Wimber's dynamism stands a person: the dynamism Wimber advocates is traceable to the importance he places on the person and work of the Holy Spirit, who animates, renews, restores, convicts and <u>acts</u> (powerfully) for God Wimber's doctrine of the Spirit, as we shall see later, can only be comprehended properly if it is seen in power terms. The third reason why it is appropriate to describe Wimber's thought in terms of power is that prominent in it are the themes of conflict and resistance. Max Weber's classic definition of power, to which the notion of resistance is central, illuminates much of Wimber's contructive thought: wherever

issues of conflict and resistance are a focus, it is appropriate to speak of a language of power.[5]

We have attempted to demonstrate that Wimber's theology and ecclesiology can be understood in terms of power, which provides us with a principle of coherence. Of course, Wimber's primary interest is the power of God and the powerfulness or effectiveness of the Gospel in its capacity to confront and transform the present powers at work in individuals and societies. His work is an exposition of the superiority of God over what is 'natural' (Wimber's term denoting 'worldly'), and represents an affirmation of the ultimate power of God in the human situation. We should note that when Wimber emphasises power as central to the Christian religion he is not doing anything new, but rather affirming a simple and most basic Christian tradition, of an <u>almighty</u> God, of Jesus as <u>Lord</u>, of the Holy Spirit in work and deed as active and transforming. What is most intriguing about Wimber's work is that it presses for a particular vision of the <u>kind</u> of power God exercises, <u>how</u> Christians receive it, and <u>what</u> its effects are likely to be.

One cannot get away from the power language of Wimber, and the only question is rightly to determine its significance for the whole of our study, and beyond it The frameworks that have been used to interpret fundamentalist thinking to date have been unequal to their task, not least because, as I have already suggested, they have been unprepared to see that fundamentalism is an alternative type of systematic theology. (Whether one thinks that it is good or bad is another matter). But fundamentalism is nevertheless, a tendency, expressed in many different ways, that seeks to confront the power of liberalism, modernity and pluralism, subvert its influence in society, church and the individual, in order that the power and authority of God will have the maximum effect in the widest possible context. In seeking an understanding of fundamentalism, what better place to start could there be than to pay close attention to our case-study and to the obvious, to the ubiquitous power language of Wimber? And then to probe it, to ascertain whether or not the language of power and the concepts of power in fact give rise to a theology of power in Wimber, which

will in turn have implicature for the study of other fundamentalists in the future

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

Section (a):

1. See for example, G.M. Marsden, "Fundamentlaism as an American Phenomenon", Church History, vol.46, June 1977, pp.215-232, and Fundamentalism and American Culture, New York, Oxford University Press, 1980; C.A. Russell, Voices of American Fundamentalism, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1976; E.R. Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970.
2. See for example C. Flake, Redemptorama: Culture, Politics and the New Evangelicalsm, New York, Penguin Books, 1984; P.D. Young, God's Bullies: Native Reflections on Preachers and Politics, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982.
3. For example, on Jerry Falwell. See R.M. Brown, "Listen, Jerry Falwell", Christianity and Crisis, vol.40, no.21, 22 December 1980, pp.360-364; G. Fackre, The Religious Right and Christian Faith, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1982.
4. Examples might include J. Barr, Fundamentalism, London, SCM Press, 1978, or E. Gritsch, Born Againism, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1982.
5. Barr, 1978, pp. iii-iv.
6. Barr, 1978, p.6.
7. See Robin Gill, Competing Convictions, London, SCM, 1989. Gill points out that Christianity has always been 'balanced' by 'absolutist' and 'relativist' wings.
8. This is still a problem for Barr, which consistently haunts premises made in his 1978 book. See Anvil vol.8., no.1, 1991, and no.2., 1991.
9. Anvil, vol.8., no.2., 1991, p.54.
10. See for example Charles Hutson, Who is Fundamentalist?, Murfreesboro, TN, Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1982, p.4: "I am a fundamentalist...I am not a New Evangelical, as some claim to be. In the first place, if it is new, it is not evangelical...The New Evangelicals disclaim any animosity for infidels. They are willing to listen to any unbeliever's arguments and...fellowship with those who are enemies of Christ and the Bible."
11. Dispensational premillennilialists traditionally affirm: (i) that God will deal with human beings in judgement via a series of dispensations, which have a beginning, a test, and its termination in judgement. The 'Dispensations' are periods of time, there being seven in all: innocence, conscience, civil government, promise, law, grace and the kingdom. (ii) the 'charismata' of the New Testament are confined to the prophetic age. (iii) Christ will return in power soon, and will gather up all believers, prior to a further one thousand year period on earth in which those left behind will be able to respond to Christ for themselves.
12. G.M. Marsden, "Defining Fundamentalism", Christian Scholar's Review, 1, 1971, p.141-151.
13. Ibid., p.150.

14. K.C. Boone, The Bible Tells Them So: The Discourse of Protestant Fundamentalism, London, SCM Press, 1990, p.14.

Section (b):

1. Boone, 1990, p.10.
2. This is a standard definition. See for example The Oxford English Dictionary.
3. Martin Marty, "Fundamentalism Reborn", in Religion and Republic, Boston, Beacon Press, 1987, pp.299-300.
4. Ibid., p.3.
5. See N.C. Sellers, Biblical Conclusions Concerning Tongues, Miami, n.p., 1972, p.26; J. Falwell (ed), The Fundamentalist Phenomenon: The Resurgence of Conservative Christianity, Garden City, Galilee-Doubleday, 1981, p.71.
6. See J. Falwell, The Fundamentalist Phenomenon, 1981, pp.128-131, for a thorough overview of fundamentalist antagonism towards Billy Graham. While few question Graham's orthodoxy, some fundamentalists criticise him for not separating from the ungodly (i.e., Roman Catholics, some 'liberals', etc). Ian Paisley, for example, calls for 'the complete rejection of Graham' and asks Christians to forgive Graham for 'sending converts back to the papal anti-Christ'. (p.247).
7. Carl Henry, God, Revelation and Authority (vol 4), Waco, Texas, Word Books, 1979, p.100, 122.
8. See David Ford, "Faith in the Cities", in C. Gunton & D. Hardy (eds.), On Being the Church, Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1989, p.243.
9. The British Evanglical Alliance incorporates a broad cross-section of denominations and movements. Members include 'House Churches' (Ichthus, Team Spirit, etc), organisations (British Youth for Christ, Proclamation Trust, etc) and representatives from denominations, ranging from Anglicans to "The Jesus Army" (formerly "The Bugbrooke Fellowship"). The E.A. represents fundamentalist, conservative evangelical and charismatic view-points. They organise annual public marches involving around one million people across the country ("March for Jesus"), annual conventions ("Spring Harvest", attracting over 100,000 people per year), as well as organising political and media-based campaigns. At present, the E.A. is not a member of the new ecumenical instrument in England, 'Churches Together in England' (C.T.E.). The reasons for this are unclear, but probably centre on their desire to keep their goals sharp and distinctive, a fear of colluding with 'liberals', and of being identified with a broad/pluralist expression of Christianity.
10. G. Lindbeck, The Nature of Doctrine, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1984, pp.33ff.
11. Ibid., p.34.
12. An example of this would be the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship's (U.C.C.F., linked to I.V.P., Inter-Varsity Press) insistence on 'penal substitution' as

being the only way of understanding the atonement. The notion of a variety of symbols and metaphors in the New Testament expressing what God has done in Christ on the cross, therefore leaving room for different concepts of what Christ's death means and achieves, is generally eschewed by U.C.C.F.. Members are required to sign a 'statement of faith' in which other possible interpretations are denied. For a fuller analysis, see Steve Bruce's Firm in the Faith, 1984.

13. See Stephen Sykes on 'Power' in, The Identity of Christianity, London, SPCK, 1984, p.11.; See also Stephen Pickard, The Purpose of Stating the Faith, PhD. Thesis, University of Durham, 1990.

Section (c):

1. David Watson was a prominent leader in the British evangelical-charismatic movement, who first met Wimber in 1981. For a fuller discussion of David Watson's prominence in British church life, see P. Hocken, Streams of Renewal, Exeter, Paternoster Press, 1986, and Edward England (ed), David Watson: A Portrait by his Friends, Crowborough, Highland Books, 1985.

2. Roger Forster's Ichthus Fellowship and Terry Virgo's New Frontiers churches would be included in this, as would individual Anglican, Baptist, Methodist churches, along with other non-alligned fellowships and churches.

3. Dynamics of Spiritual Growth, pp.29ff: 'I realised that the Bible was written in such a manner that to reject one part was to reject it all. This was a power point, a discovery that put me on the narrow path to salvation'.

4. Wimber: 'In order to see God's church multiply as it is doing in the rest of the world, the western church must become involved in power evangelism. We must allow the Holy Spirit to empower us...when we encounter the lost we must have the power - the ablity to see into men's hearts and know their sin and their need, the ability to heal those who are ill, the ability to free those who are bound by Satan. ("Signs and Wonders in the Growth of the Church", C.P. Wagner (ed), Church Growth: State of the Art, Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale Press, 1989, p.224.)

5. See Equipping the Saints, Special UK Edition, Fall 1990, p.28: "The Bible is full of examples of Christians who defend themselves against false accusations and criticism. In my case, however, God has told me not to."

6. Actually, Wimber has not authored these books so much as authorised them. His associate Kevin Springer compiles the books from Wimber's tapes and notes, with Wimber doing the final editing.

7. See for example, T. Payne and P. Jensen, John Wimber: Friend or Foe?, Sydney, St.Matthias Press, 1990. This is a bitter, unsystematic attack from some conservative evangelicals. Four more decent and recent books of related interest are J.F. MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, Zondervan,

Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1992: "My principal concern is to call the Church to a firm commitment to the purity and authority of the Scriptures, and thereby strengthen the unity of the true Church." (From the Foreword); R.M. Enroth, Churches that Abuse, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1992, which includes a chapter on Wimber, whose churches are described as 'potentially abusive'. (In my view this is a weak appraisal of the extremes of charismatic fundamentalism, with too many extreme case-studies and insufficient in-depth analysis); M.S. Huton (Ed), Power Religion: The Selling Out of the Evangelical Church, Moody Press, Los Angeles, 1992. (This book includes contributions refuting signs and wonders from authors such as J.I. Packer, who writes from a modern but rigorous Puritain perspective. There is some good material in this volume, but it is 'patchy'); and J.R. Coggins & P.G. Hiebert (Eds.), Wonders and the Word Kindred Press, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1989. This last book contains some incisive comment on healing and the phenomena of signs and wonders, from a largely Mennonite perspective.

Section (d):

1. Dynamics of Spiritual Growth, pp.17-18.
2. Kingdom Suffering, p.12.
3. J. Gunstone, Signs and Wonders: The Wimber Phenomenon, London, DLT-Daybreak, 1989, p.5.
4. Church Growth is 'the science that investigates the nature, function, and health of the Christian churches as they relate specifically to the effective implementation of God's Commission to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). Church Growth is simultaneusly a theological conviction and an applied science, striving to combine the eternal principles of God's Word with the best insights of contemporary social and behavioural sciences, employing as its initial frame of reference the foundational work done by Donald McGavran and his colleagues'. (Church Growth: State of the Art, p.284).
5. See also The Bridges of God, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1958, How to Grow a Church, Washington, Regal Books, 1973, Ten Steps for Church Growth, New York, Harper and Row, 1977, and Back to Basics in Church Growth, Wheaton, Tyndale, 1981.
6. J. Gunstone, Signs and Wonders, p.11.
7. Ibid., p.15.
8. Ibid., p.16.
9. Equiping the Saints, vol.5., no.3., Summer 1991, and Equipping the Saints, vol.6., no.3., Summer 1992.
10. These mostly surround the costs of his conferences to the public, in relation to the actual costs incurred for organising them. Some correspondence about this matter appeared in The Church of England Newspaper following the 1990 London Docklands Conference. Questions have been raised over the size of profits from conferences, and their eventual destination. For example, fees per head for the Brighton Conference in 1987 averaged £45: about 4000

attended. With the sale of materials added, around £200,000 might have been generated during the four day conference. There was also an offering taken, which exceeded £30,000. However, it is not clear if VMI pay for any facilities used at Brighton. The hire of the Centre and equipment is free to certain charitable organisations and others, through the Brighton Town Council's 'Public Meeting Scheme'. Fees are waived, because of the business generated for the tourist industry, local hotels and restaurants. Participants for the Wimber conference of 1987 booked through Terry Virgo's New Frontiers organisation, which has attained charitable status. Both VMI and New Frontiers have declined to comment on the size of profits from such Conferences.

11. See S.M. Burgess, G.B. McGee and P.H. Alexander, A Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, entry under 'Healing Movements'.

12. See D. Williams, Signs, Wonders and the Kingdom of God, Ann Arbor, Vine, 1989, viii. John White, writing in the Foreword, states: "Fundamentalist theology of the twentieth century, initially a valuable reaffirmation of the faith in the face of liberal theology, gradually took on the colouring not only of reaction against liberals but against the Pentecostal movement. In doing so it not only became more reactionary, but it threw out the baby of God's power, all the while denying that it was doing so. And the reaction at that point was less a reflection of biblical truth than of unconscious fears blinding us to some things Scripture was saying."

Section (e):

1. In this way, Wimber's view of church history is not very different from that of British Restorationists, who believe the Holy Spirit was 'lost from' or neglected by the church since the time of the apostles. Apart from a few isolated and persecuted minorities, who Restorationists claim were 'in touch' with the Spirit (such as Anabaptists, Montanists, etc), they assert that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were ignored by the church, until now, when through small groups and 'House Churches', God is restoring the fullness of the spiritual blessings that the early apostles knew. For a fuller discussion, see A. Walker, Restoring the Kingdom, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1988 (2nd edition).

2. To borrow a phrase from Harnack. Although Harnack's idea of transpotentiation was that the church had transferred its power to institutionality, and the power of the Gospel for transformation of the inner life was thus lost.

3. Church Growth: State of the Art, p.224.

4. Ibid., 216.

5. See Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, London, Macmillan, 1964.

CHAPTER TWO

QUESTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

a. Introduction: Power and Fundamentalism

In order to comprehend why individuals become and remain fundamentalists, it seemed to be important to understand how God, the church and the world appear to the individual inside the movement. I therefore want to analyse the role, both perceived and actual, that the power of God, church and world play in constitution the fundamentalist universe. However, I am mindful of Michael Foucault's suggestion that:

> Nothing is fundamental. That is what is interesting in the analysis of society. That is why nothing irritates me so much as these inquiries - which are by definition metaphysical - on the foundations of power in a society or the self-institution of society, etc. These are not fundamental phenomena. There are only reciprocal relations, and the perpetual gaps between intentions in relation to one another.'

Of course, it is ironic that Foucault says that 'nothing is fundamental', and then says 'there are only reciprocal relations.' As we have noted previously, where there are ideas, people, communities and God, necessarily engaged in interrelationship, it is appropriate to speak of a language and concepts of power. Relations involve conflict, coercion, persuasion, adjustment and space. Foucault may well be right in hinting that 'pure power' as such, does not exist; but that does not disallow discussion of power being fundamental any more than Foucault would be denied his attempt to place 'relations' as fundamental. Relations are indeed fundamental, and where there are relations, it is appropriate to speak of power.

So, what definition of power are we working with? Basically, in my form of analysis I hold that power is a multi-faceted reality, like fundamentalism itself. It is the 'force' that can apply itself through and reify itself via agents (tools). It is dispositional, in the form of

ideas, manners, bonding and unity. It is also episodic, in the form of specific instances, interventions and moments. It is a phenomenon present within all epistemological and social frameworks, usually encountered via its agents rather than the source itself. Power is a function of systems of social interaction.

Accordingly, my analysis of fundamentalism, using John Wimber as a case-study, is not an attempt to reduce the ultimate origins of all fundamentalism to concepts of power and powerful individuals. Rather, it is an attempt to investigate fundamentalist discourse and behaviour by analyzing the inter-relationship of its various aspects. In this thesis, Wimber's 'power-relationality' provides us with an important insight into how fundamentalism works, precisely because of his direct appeal to 'power-points' (his own phrase), which, he claims, are nodal points that govern and transform relationships (between people and ideas, God and humanity, etc.).

Further still, I hold that the task of this thesis has some urgency, especially in the field of ecclesiology. Ecclesiology once operated with a pattern that distinguished between 'order' and 'organisation': the essential structure of the visible church was a matter of revelation; the rest of it was held not to be theologically significant. The order-organization distinction provided Christian communities with a theological base for institutional structure, since organization followed logically from (revealed) order. In fundamentalist communities, where the revealed order is 'narrow' and unnegotiable, corresponding structural implications naturally arise, so that church administration has a clear theological base, from which subsequent theological constructions might be prosecuted or defended.

So, understanding fundamentalist belief and organisation requires the careful use of sociological tools that can bridge the gap between the language and models of fundamentalist theology and the language and models of its modern organisation. A way forward then, is to examine key concepts that inform a given community not only about its theology, but also about its ecclesiology. Clearly, one such concept is power, which functions

analogously on both sides of the gap: the omnipotence of God, the Lordship of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit, place the concept of power at the centre of theology; in organisational theory, a grasp of relationships and hierarchy (power) are essential to understanding any institution. In using the concept of power to interpret fundamentalism, we will gain an understanding of how individual fundamentalists regard God, as well as the communities in which they seek to serve him. So, this Chapter will proceed by first discussing the central importance of a concept of power for a proper empathetic and systematic understanding of fundamentalism. In particular, the relational conflation between divine and human power in such communities will be explored, with its consequent implications for theology and ecclesiology. The historical and theological background to Wimber's concern with power will then be sketched, prior to his power terminology being examined in more detail. Chapter Two concludes by looking at the appropriate questions to ask in our inquiry.

b. A Religion of Power: Exploring the Key Issues

A religion has a set of beliefs, either dogmatically set forth or instinctively recognised and accepted by those who hold them. This set of beliefs includes an element of faith or trust, and, perhaps, a primitive view of cause and effect. The following of certain religious conventions ensures for the believer, a better, more interesting and ultimately rewarding future: these promises are implicit in almost all religions. Power is clearly a fundamental issue in any such religion, and especially so in fundamentalist expressions. Even writers sympathetic to American Protestant fundamentalism recognise that 'there is a striking difference in the desire of [contemporary] fundamentalism for power', that holds the system together, and magnifies it.'[1] Of course, that desire in fundamentalism is manifest in many different forms, and becomes concretised in various social and sacred activities. Political power, if achieved, can promote 'spiritual values' on a wider social scale. Liturgical power can organise and routinise a community. Access to transcendent or charismatic power can enhance the position of a leader as the most viable mediator between God and humanity.

Cheryl Forbes, in her influential critique of power in the contemporary American evangelical scene, notes that 'the point of power is to be visible, and it promises visibility to the worshipper.'[2] She chides modern evangelical leaders for their pursuit of success (Forbes equates this with power) - in all its spheres - and suggests that most churches fail to own up to their preoccupation with power, and choose instead to mask it under a new vocabulary, with words such as 'leadership', 'authority' or 'simplicity'. Although the labour of her thesis is to exorcise the influence of 'possibility thinkers' from evangelicalism[3], she makes a number of interesting personal observations that are useful to us. Firstly, she notes the tendency of evangelicals and fundamentalists to use stimulating and well-known personalities who have become Christians, in their evangelism. The appeal to a powerful personality who is a convert, she suggests, is a 'power-game'. On one level, it assures 'more average' believers (or interested non-believers) that they are correct in

subscribing to this particular form of Christianity. Yet at a deeper level, she suggests that the use of a powerful personality from a profession (acting, politics, sport, etc) is a way of not talking about powerless people who might also believe. She maintains that this is because the powerless, those who are sick, poor or handicapped are not used in the service of the church (in evangelism) because their lives do not apparently or immediately speak of God's power. Thus she concludes, fundamentalists use power in the service of greater power. She carries this argument over into the realm of miracles, signs and wonders, and questions evangelicals and fundamentalists as to whether or not they have 'moulded' God in their own image, and then turned themselves into 'power-brokers', with potentially damaging results.[4] This reaches a peak for Forbes in her engagement with the Charismatic Movement (underlining mine):

> I attended the "First International Conference on the Holy Spirit" as a reporter. Most of the attendees spoke in tongues and were convinced someone wasn't 'completely' a Christian if he didn't. Since I was not a charismatic, I became the object of much witnessing. People badgered me about speaking in tongues (there is no other way to describe it). One otherwise charming elderly woman told me that God had sent me to the conference just so I would begin to speak in tongues. And there were others, not quite as charming, who upbraided me for not submitting to the Holy Spirit, for being proud and defensive. These people wanted power over my relationship with God. They used every spiritual tactic they could think of to shame, harass, embarrass, and propel me into an experience that was for them the mark of a Christian.[5]

The experience of Forbes demonstrates the multi-layered way in which power is functioning in a charismatic community such as the one she describes. She is perceived by the conference participants to be lacking in some fundamental aspect of God's power. Consequently, power in the form of pressure is applied to her, with those applying such pressure presumably (and sincerely) seeing themselves as agents of God's power, through whom Forbes might ultimately be blessed.

All this seems a long way away from the assessment of charismatic phenomena and the resulting ecclesiology made by David Ford and Daniel Hardy, in Jubilate: Theology in Praise (1984). Although they rcognise that

in charismatic renewal 'the power of the real thing is paralleled by awful examples of what its imitations and perversions can do' (p.20), they portray a much more positive picture of the place of power in religion. The focus of their concern is to 'participate in the free and unconstrained activity of God' by constructing a theology of praise. They equate Pentecostalism and charismatic renewal with what they call 'the jazz factor'; the worshippers literally become instruments of praise in this analogy, with spontaneity, freedom, innovation and harmony implied, though without the constrictions of order that can sometimes stifle free response.[6]

This affirmative portrayal of Pentecostalism or charismatic renewal partly sets the agenda for the authors' understanding of power in religion, which deserves careful attention. Beginning with the observation that 'the question of God's power and action in the world is one of the most important in theology', they continue:

> A great deal of theology and daily existence is bedevilled by inappropriate ways of understanding God's power. One of the commonest pictures is of God's power in competition with his creation's freedom, and people needing protection against his overwhelming omnipotence. The model of power in this picture is a crude one of the coercive use of force.[7]

They suggest that the central systematic question is to ask how God's power is a primary cause in the world. They locate the answer in the sphere of speaking, noting that 'at its best it works by invitation and information rather than by manipulation.' On this model, even the crucifixion is 'God's speech expressed in suffering. He lets people be themselves, lets them have their freedom even to be wrong, to ignore him and to show disrespect to the point of killing.' So, in the view of Hardy and Ford, the power of God, if rejected or opposed is not met with counter-force by God, but with a willingness to respect the power that has been given to the world. Even the resurrection is not a reversal of this: rather, it is an overcoming of evil and death in a way that respects the world, yet also judges it and probes its limits.

In spite of Ford and Hardy's positive view of Pentecostalism and charismatic renewal, we do not find their liberating and rich view of the power of God reflected in the ecclesial community under investigation in this thesis. This is not meant to sound harsh or dismissive. Certainly, Wimber's theology and ecclesiology are an attempt to recover an (apparently) lost sense of the immediate power of God to the Church and to the individual. But the question this thesis will constantly probe is, what kind of powers is Wimber attributing to God and then, in turn, to the Church? A few comparative examples will illustrate the point.

For instance, the notion of speech as being a primary form of causality for the power of God is present in Wimber's Churches, most suggestively in the phenomena and teaching concerning 'words of knowledge'. These words, reputedly supernatural in origin, are used to persuade, convict and transform individuals, in order that they might respond to God [PE, p. 47]. Although there is some biblical precedent for such approaches (e.g., Jesus and the woman at the well, John 4), the problem with Wimber and his followers' use of words of knowledge is that they frequently do not permit a free response, or constitute an invitation. Instead, they are tools for persuasion, manipulation and coercion; thus, Wimber writes: 'In power evangelism, resistance to the Gospel is supernaturally overcome' [PE, p. 47]. So the speech of God for Wimber, here in the form of words of knowledge, is a notion of the power of God that competes with the freedom God has given in creation, utlimately quashing it. In Wimber's view, God will use any form of power - including a coercive speech-act - to gain the response of an individual.

An ecclesiological dimension inevitably follows this view of power, which is masked in authority structures. Some of Wimber's followers, and perhaps Wimber himself, believe in what they call the recovery of 'the Annanias and Sapphira scenario' amongst their churches (Acts 5: 1 - 11). Followers who resist or lie to leaders are deemed to be resisting or lying to God, and are therefore immediately liable to the power of God in the form of judgement.* This invests the leaders of Wimber's churches with a high degree of authority, since they can already receive words of knowledge concerning an individual's secret or sinful state. Thus, the room to

respond to a word of knowledge is severely restricted, with the result that the power of God is often perceived as being the irresistable force meeting the movable object. Similar attitudes to power in Wimber's thinking and churches can be traced in the phenomenon of 'being slain in the Spirit'.[9]

Although these observations are necessarily critical, we should note that Wimber is trying to do no more than conform the way in which power works in the church with the way in which he believes God exercises power. What appears to have gone wrong is that God's super-abundance has been fundamentally misunderstood. For example, phenomena like 'speaking in tongues' should mirror the 'overspilling of the internal trintarian process of communication'[10], resulting in a 'cathedral of sound' being created, that reflects the glory of God. This form of communication ought to be invitational and inclusive in orientation (1 Cor. 14: 22 - 25), prompting even those who do not understand it to recognise the authentic presence of God. Yet frequently, this is not the case, with 'speaking in tongues' being used as a tool that demonstrates the power of God, and therefore of the Church concerned in their capacity to receive and handle it. Thus, this form of communication shifts from being dialogical communication to monological communication - exactly the problem Cheryl Forbes tried to articulate in the quotation above. The people she met at the "First Conference of the Holy Spirit" wanted her to know the power of God, to be sure. But their perception of that power as a necessary hallmark for the spiritual completeness of the individual Christian places a limit on the freedom of people to respond as they wish, as well as reducing the power of God to that of a coercive agent. The form and content of God's power is not that of a totalitarian ruler: it is, like the inner life of the trinity itself, an incorporative sharing that necessarily expands to include all of creation, whilst respecting its freedom to respond appropriately or inappropriately. Given these comments, let us now try and summarise the scope of our systematic problem, before concluding this Chapter with the central questions the thesis will address.

(i) The Nature of the Problem: There are two socio-theological reasons why it is important to understand what is meant by power. Firstly, power is one of the primary religious ideas; humanity's awareness of God is an awareness of him as powerful. It is seen as a fundamental attribute of God. The possibility and existence of God reside in his omnipotence; the election and guidance of Israel are viewed as being marked by specific manifestations of power; Jesus' good news concerns the reign and kingdom of God, that is, the perfect expression of his power; as Christ and Lord, Jesus shares in that power, revealing a new knowledge of the love of God which is now disclosed as being the central feature of God's power. Secondly, a right attitude to power is fundamental in human social relations. The source, practice and goals of power are important here. To Christ, all power in heaven and on earth is given, and the Christian's citizenship of heaven implies that a personal appeal may be made to a transcendent form of power. Yet the earthly authorities are also to exercise power and are to be obeyed by citizens, as they carry out their work of administering justice as God's agents.

Both observations are crucial to our enquiry. In the type of (charismatic) fundamentalism under investigation, the distinction between 'opus Dei' and 'opus hominum' is blurred to the extent that is difficult to perceive their precise nature and (subsequent) proper relationship. The use of the word 'distinction' is not meant to imply a separation: it is recognised that all human action is dependent on God as its creative ground, and equally, that God's power must be made known through some form of created - often human - agency. Given the type of community and theology being interrogated, the "Key Questions" (Section 2. e) attempt to show the following:

1. Where power is located: in leadership, ideology, the agency of charisma, and so on. Also, where Wimber locates both God's and his power from within his theology.

2. How the power is exercised: explaining, for example, how leadership and charisma conflate, in order to establish patterns for mediating 'godly authority'.

3. The effects of exercising power: the social and theological impact of such exercising is examined, and its effectiveness in providing an authentic world-view.

In the type of 'power theology' (and subsequent community) that is the subject of this thesis, the questions set and answered illustrate, analyse and critique one type of Christian response to the apparent absence of God's power in the face of the problems deemed to be posed by pluralism and modernity.

(ii)The Nature of Power: Power is most often chiefly in question in the sphere of social relations, since social power can be the will of individuals or groups exercising a determining influence on the communal life of a number of people within an organised structure. Such a will cannot be powerful by the mere act of willing, but by imposing what it wills externally. This 'external' domain is the 'world' in which the group share their existence, and at the same time it also represents their will, by which they fulfil themselves in their world. If the powerful will works by the freely consenting wills of others from the same world, power assumes the form of authority. If it acts directly on other external realities, it can assume the form of force. But power and authority are at their strongest when being consented to, since power can then be drawn from within, and not merely from extrinsic means.

These observations have rich implications for our study of Wimber. The powerful will must be at one with the consenting will of others, and yet it must also be at one with itself. This demands that what it wills ought to exist and its act ought to be posited (in this case, the nature and activity of God understood through a working 'power theology' that will shape ecclesial behaviour and destiny); that is, this form of power must be good and rightful. So, the real purpose of power can be partly expressed here as (visible?) goal-attainment, namely increasing the power and

influence of what is said to be good and right, in the interests of a common good. So, power has both a horizontal and vertical dimension to it: horizontally, it harmonises community will, and vertically, it attempts to be in harmony with the higher goals of what it believes to be 'normally' right and good. In short, as far as our study of Wimber and his theology is concerned, power is the effective ordering of his communities in relation to God and in relation to the world. For such purposes, both authority and force are legitimised in social relations and theological dynamics.''

The exercise of power in Wimber's theory and practice is intrinsically linked to the blur that results from the confusion over what is 'opus Dei' and what is 'opus hominum'. The fact that this confusion has arisen at all is traceable to the very foundations of Wimber's movement. Wimber has never been clear in distinguishing his own powers from that of God's power working in him: rather than trying to clarify this tension, he has in fact built upon it. The results - often traceable in other forms of (charismatic) fundamentalism - have consequently been threefold. Firstly, clear patterns for mediating (godly) social and theological authority or force have emerged: one primary leader (Wimber), supported by a group of 'anointed' underlings. Secondly, the authority or force of God has become merged - for the whole community - in the office of the leaders, making the distinction between human and divine power difficult to actualise. Thirdly, the leaders have become the chief mediators of God's power, via the agency of say, healing, prophecy, or renewal. Therefore, the <u>nature</u> of power for the community concerned becomes identified with <u>how</u> that power is actually exercised.

(iii)<u>The Consequences of Power</u>: We have argued earlier (2. a) that power is a multi-faceted reality, like fundamentalism itself. It is the 'force' that applies itself through and reifies itself via agents (tools). It can be dispositional, in the form of ideas, manners, bonding and unity. It can also be episodic, in the form of specific instances, interventions and moments. It is a phenomenon present within all epistemological and social frameworks usually encountered via its agents rather than the source itself. Apart from the power of God, power is a function of systems of

social interaction; power is one of the important means of social organisation. Agents are 'things' capable of motivity, that is to say moving or impelling power. Agents can be people, instances, doctrines, situations, and so on. Within a given world-view, agents are the nodal or fixed points that reify power or allow access to power, provide markers or boundaries for a circuit (group, identity, etc.), and ensure the connectedness of the power-relations. Charisma can be an agent as much as an individual doctrine, and each agent will have its own structure made up of other nodal points. What though, are the likely effects of a 'power theology' and 'power community' on itself and on other? Here are some suggestions:

1. Finite power is always tempted to establish itself in self-assertion, to shut itself off in ostensible independence in the face of competition from other finite wills. This leads to the community and its main sponsors becoming non-dialogical, and ultimately sectarian. In Wimber's case, this has already happened: he has a 'policy' of not answering criticism, or of engaging with critics, on the basis that it drains his energy and diverts the attention of the community.

2. If divine power is conflated with human power in the face of this non-dialogical stance, the leaders themselves will beome 'fundamental' instruments of God. This is partly authenticated by the agency of charisma, which bears witness to the leader as God's elect, and often makes the community unmanageable after its demise, even if the ideology remains intact.

3. The failure to distinguish between 'opus Dei' and 'opus hominum' leads to a distorted form of ecclesiology. The preservation of the community's identity becomes too vital a task, since it identifies itself and its goals too closely with God and his purposes. Thus, what the community and its leaders want is what God wants. So, the task of the community move from being a responsive, open engagement in social inter-relationships quickened by the Spirit (Mission), to being a closed type of agenda, in which God and the community only confront the world in a defensive fashion, yet with clear targets in mind.

4. The 'power theology' of Wimber is too stipulative and programmatic. Although individuals may find it initially progressive, it ultimately fails in its obligation as a form of truth in setting people free. The ecclesial structure - funded by charisma and ideology - is partly to blame. But at the root of this, lies a theology that has not dared articulate the limits of power (and its implications), and has attempted to possess and own God's power (albeit for apparently worthy causes), rather than be owned by it.

5. The theological and ecclesial work of Wimber is too mechanistic. Against the threat of randomness that modern plurality seems to suggest, Wimber, like many other fundamentalists, offers a God who is in tight control of the world, even when the discovered nature of his creation seems to rule out such totalitarianism. Logically, it is almost impossible for Wimber and his followers to avoid determinism and its theological offshoots such as predestination. The evidence of such notions can be traced in Wimber's churches, as we shall see later.

I am more than conscious that these are serious charges. But it is my expectation that this thesis will bear out these points. The methodology employed recognises that disclosing the 'identity' of a given Christian community will depend partly on discovering that

> the language of sociology and the language of theology may be separate, but the reality of divine and human power is not. It is not parallel or merely co-ordinated, it is inevitably, and dangerously, mixed.'[12]

Ultimately, the 'Religion of Power', like all forms of fundamentalism, will be shown to be an insecure response to the modern situation. Instead of grounding ecclesial, individual and theological identity in an open movement towards God and others, the search for the power of God has been laid to rest prematurely. The desire to channel the energy of God leads communities to refer what is finite and fallible only to itself and idolise it as infinite or infallible. Thus we agree with Edward Farley when he states: 'Nurtured in insecurity, sin's motivation is to secure, to anchor

human being in a cosmos projected by itself, a creation of its own act of meaning or intentionality'.[13]

c. The Historical and Theological Context to Wimber's Concern with Power

Tracing Wimber's historical and theological concern with power necessarily involves a degree of sifting, collating and interpreting for the inquirer. We have already attempted to demonstrate that analysis of Wimber might proceed via the adoption of the concept of power as being the principle of coherence for his work and works. But two questions necessarily follow from this procedure. Firstly, how does Wimber himself see history, and does this authenticate the procedure and method chosen? Secondly, but related to the first question, what historical roots might Wimber possess that lead him to construct his theology and ecclesiology in the way that he does?

Wimber's analysis of history can be shown to proceed in terms of power by reference to his treatment of signs and wonders in church history [PE, pp. 151 - 174]. In two important appendices, Wimber divides instances of signs and wonders into four periods: patristic, medieval, reformation-modern and twentieth century.. Wimber's strategy in this piece of work is to show that signs and wonders have always been part of the witness of the church, and therefore, his present enterprise stands within a credible tradition. The execution of this strategy however, is somewhat simplistic, and its use as 'proof' owes much to Wimber deliberately not treating his sources critically. For example, citing instances from the Journal of John Wesley, he notes:

> What I discovered was that our experience at the Vineyard Christian Fellowship was not unique; people like John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Charles Finney and Jonathan Edwards all had similar phenomena in their ministries ... For example, on May 24th 1739, John Wesley wrote in his journal ... "About three in the morning as we were continuing instant in prayer the power of God came mightily upon, insomuch that many cried out for exulting joy and fell to the ground...".'

Wimber handles an historical pehenomenon with a view to exposing its power dynamics. His works are littered with similar examples of historical phenomena 'processed' for their power-relationality, although I would

contend that his hermenuetical skills are weak.[2] He is not choosy either, about where he draws examples of power-related phenomenon from. Sources range from Prophet Harris (founder of Nigerian charismatic cult) to the recorded healings at the shrine at Lourdes, from the more familiar Azusa Street Revival (1906) to the modern missionary campaigns of Reinhard Bonnke. Even so, it is clear that Wimber's primary power interest is the power of God and the empowered community as it celebrates the effectiveness or powerfulness of God's action in its life, drawing individuals into a deeper bond with God. Furthermore, Wimber contrasts this power - a liberating, transforming force that is made known through the Holy Spirit - with what he sees as the more traditional powers of the Church, namely that of constraint, and the deadening effects of tradition, rationality and orthodoxy [PE, pp. 147 - 150, DSG, pp. 3 - 10].

Consequently, Wimber is constantly pressing the superiority of the power of Christ over every aspect of nature. The power of God can be ultimately affirmed in Scripture, in history, and also in the present. 'The power of God' for Wimber means that human, economic, geological, social and organisational powers - in fact power of any kind - can be subject at any moment to the superior power of God. Thus, the mission of Christ in Wimber's view becomes an historical event in which power is lost and won: on the cross, the power of sin is defeated, the power of Satan destroyed [DSG, pp. 112 - 118], and the superior power of Christ revealed over all other powers. The question naturally arises then, how does Wimber account for defeat and failure? The answer does not come by dissolving the sharp duality he proposes, but rather by postponing its final outcome by mapping the problem onto actual historical events [PP, tape 5].[3] The present and the future can therefore be characterised by Wimber in the following way:

> A war is going on! Cosmic War! Jesus is the divine invader sent by God to shatter the strengths of Satan. In that light the whole ministry of Jesus unrolls. Jesus has one purpose - to defeat Satan. Jesus was aware of this war. Paul wrote about and waged the war (Ephesians 6: 10 ff). Peter was cognizant of it (1 Peter 5: 8). Nothing has changed. The war goes on and will continue until Jesus returns.

Our second question must arise as to why a concern with power, and with power understood in this particular way, should constitute a focus for Wimber's thought and work. Several factors no doubt play their part. The first would be its accordance with Wimber's personal religious experiences shaped as they often are, by a form of dramatic intervention. These experiences in turn could well have been confirmed and built upon by his initial evangelical roots, with its stress on personal conversion, an immanent experience of being born again, and a commitment to seeing the gospel as something active and effective in others. This framework was developed by his encounter with 'Jesus People'. Another factor would be Wimber's theological education, at Azusa Pacific University, where he would have been exposed to teaching from Pentecostal and evangelical lecturers, although curiously, Wimber denies any familiarity with a Pentecostal education, (presumably because it would have been initially unacceptable to his original Quaker-evangelical church at Yorba Linda). After graduation, he was exposed to evangelicals who were familiar with the power of the Holy Spirit via their own experience of charismatic renewal: the influence of Peter Wagner has already been mentioned, but figures such a George Eldon Ladd and James Kallas have also played their part.[8]

A third factor lies in the apologetic resonance of interpreting Christianity in terms of power. Power is a subject which current intellectual, political and economic developments constantly place in the foreground of peoples' thought, and so an apologetic which speaks in terms of power stands a good chance of holding attention and of being initially understood. Indeed, as we have hinted before, one of the things which drives fundamentalists so hard is the conviction that the power they serve is greater than the combined force of plurality and modernity. The fundamentalist endeavour is therefore frequently concerned with channelling and directing that power against the prevailing powers of the age. A form of fundamentalism that explicitly articulates this, instead of disguising it in modes of authority or textuality, is bound to be appealing. Developments in theology and the Church in the twentieth century may also have contributed to Wimber focussing on the power of God. Troeltsch points out that prior to the enlightenment the church established its proofs of the divine power in terms of miracle and the fulfillment of prophecy, but

that when it departed from a strong emphasis on external proofs, the internal, psychological miracle of divine power working within the soul became more important.[e] Although Wimber has a high place for the internal activity of divine power in his work and works, he nevertheless seems to be striving to recover what has been apparently lost since the enlightenment. This partly accounts for his repeated attacks on post-enlightenment 'western world-views' [e.g., DSG, pp. 180 - 181]. Another factor which seems to promote Wimber's interest in the subject of power is his distress about the present state of the Church (so often referred to as 'dead', 'asleep', etc.), which in his view, leads to a powerlessness that allows Satan and his advocates too much opportunity to extend their power. So again, his sharp dualism gives rise to a theology and ecclesiology of power:

> the struggle we are in is not a civil war within a kingdom. It is the Kingdom of God against the Kingdom of Satan. The strong man's house (i.e. Satan's Kingdom) is bound (deo - to bind - a metaphorical indicating the curbing of power). Satan's power is curbed but obviously he is now powerless ... God desires to raise an army, not an audience. He wants us to be aware of the enemy's plans and weapons. He longs to equip us with His weapons. His wish is that we may fight the good fight of faith. [PP, manual, p. 43, and tape 5a.]

Another factor that cannot be overlooked is the social and cultural conditions from which Wimber's power theology has emerged. We might 'dub' this the 'Californian factor', and it operates at a variety of levels. California itself has a number of Pentecostal Seminaries, Universities, Graduate Schools and Bible Colleges, a strong tradition of charismatic renewal beginning with the Azusa Street Revival of 1906 in Los Angeles, continuing right through to the 'Jesus People' of the early 1970's. Although I am conscious that all human situations involve power and that power accordingly cannot fail to be of some interest at all times, I would nevertheless argue that Californian people, especially those with Christian backgrounds, are peculiarly sensitised to the issues of power. This is partly because of the rapid and conflictual pace of change that seems endemic to California (in social trends, ideals and the Church), and partly due to the idealism and romanticism that seems to characterise the pervading mood of society: such a situation seems to be predisposed to a

fascination with power. Wimber appears to both a master and a victim of the culture in this respect. Although his churches enjoy considerable support abroad, his own power base at Anaheim (in the form of numerical support: rising to 4,000, then 10,000, then falling to 5,000) is constantly prey to the contemporary 'Christian fashion scene' that is part of Californian Christianity. For example, within a few miles of the Vineyard at Anaheim is a considerable variety of styles of Christian worship: Robert Schuller's 'Crystal Cathedral', Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel, Jimmy and Tammy Bakker's Trinity Broadcast Network (tele-evangelism), to name but a few. The Californian Christian culture appears to be able to support and accommodate all these diverse bodies quite comfortably, as they compete for interest and income.

In the wider context of American culture in general, we must also note the interest in power and success that permeates many areas of society. It is a country that was founded by competing sectarian groups that initially migrated from Europe, although this net has now widened in the twentieth century to include all other continents of the world. At the heart of the invitation to be an American lies a popularised or idealised concept: power in the form of equal rights, and the opportunity of extending one's power via wealth or success. This may seem a churlish observation, yet it must be understood that it is probable that no other culture in the world could spawn and nurture the kind of theology and ecclesiology that Wimber espouses. Of course, it is exportable to other cultures like any other commodity passing from its own distinct context to another. Nevertheless, Wimber's power theology and ecclesiology is recognisably American in origin, with notable West Coast/Californian distinctives. This climate of power and success in American social, individual and ecclesial life is no doubt sufficient to explain at a basic level why Wimber's theology and ecclesiology interests his hearers so much. But some further brief explanation is necessary in order to locate Wimber's particular understanding of the different types of power and their interrelations against the background of his own work.

First there is a sharp distinction in Wimber's thought between political and religious power, which is no doubt traceable to his

evangelical upbringing. Wimber does have an interest in politics, but only insofar as he sees politics being subject to demonic influence rather than Christian influence. Essentially, Wimber's dualism only permits political power the choice between God's way and that which might be pervaded by the 'personality of Satan' [PP, manual, p. 46, tape 5a]. Then there is also the influence of several 'isms' to contend with, of which 'rationalism' is perhaps the most important. Wimber and his followers are deeply convinced that the powerlessness of the contemporary Church lies in its over-commitment to reason. One of the principle reasons Wimber advocates the 'power encounter model' of evangelism as the desideratum of Christian mission is that it, to quote Wimber, 'blows your mind open', breaking up Westernised patterns of conceptuality that have left little or no room for the miraculous [PE, pp. 28 ff]. In addition to the influence opposition to rationalism provides in Wimber's thought, his positive evangelicalism cannot be ignored. This also helped frame a power idiom for Wimber's description of the Christians' inner life. Its emphasis on new life, transformation, sanctification and various moral imperatives based on Scripture and traditional behavioural conventions constantly recurs in Wimber's writings.

To summarise, Wimber's historical and social circumstances were enough to sensitise him to the subject of power, and his idealism inclines him to ultimately locate power in the dynamic demonstrations that are effective at their point of action, whether in the inward life of the individual or the corporate life of the community. As a fundamentalist in the revival tradition, this sensitivity to power naturally shapes for Wimber his questions about the power of the Church and his view of the power of God.

Before concluding this Section, we must note Wimber's hesitancy to address the nature of God's power in any depth. We might expect Wimber to trace dogmatic beliefs back to the actual experiences of divine/spiritual power that prompted them, especially in the light of his reading of history. Yet he is hesitant about such an undertaking, and appears to be willing to explore the subject in only a limited way. Like many other classical Pentecostal or 'Holiness Movements', he does not probe <u>how</u> divine power actually operates on the individual. Two consequences result from

this, which are familiar themes in early charismatic Quakerism. Firstly, the feelings of the individual's heart are used as the only reliable register of God's activity/power. Secondly, a stress on individual and corporate holiness arises, as being the only appropriate response to the mystery of God's power. Both drives are demonstrated in Wimber's treatment of spiritual power [see Worship, 1989, and Holiness Unto the Lord, 1988], and significantly for our study, both are forms of institutional responses to unanswered questions.

It certainly seems odd that for all Wimber's talk about the power of God, and its immediate availability for transformation and redemption, there is little attempt to explain its capacity, particuliarity, and identity. (This is still true even if one takes into account his crude mechanistic tendencies at times.) Why might this be so? There is certainly no doubt that in asking questions about spiritual power one is searching the very heart of religion, and that the consequences of the questions could be far-reaching. Reverence and awe on the part of believers does account for some hesitation: how do mere humans plumb the depths of the divine, asking not only what God has done, but how it is done? Widespread discomfort with the subject of power in general also plays a part: fear is a factor that inhibits deeper investigation in many disciplines at many levels. Perhaps in Wimber's case there is a fear that a deep probe into his major fundamental - the power of God - may have the effect of starting a reductive or deconstructive process in himself and his followers, leading to foreseeable consequences: the power of God becomming a psychological trait, words of knowledge becomming simply autosuggestion, the immediacy of God in his community emerging as just a method of relationality. To question the power of God implies that there might be some uncomfortable conclusions: which fundamentalist in the revival tradition would want to face those?[7]

Something else which restrains Wimber and others from pressing the question of God's power is that it might imply partial unbelief. Again, it was Troeltsch who observed that miracles and psychological/inward manifestations of power are something of a last bastion for transcendence.[8] Only those who are unsure of God's power are likely to probe its limits in

an effort to gain reassurance. If the world exhibited abundant evidence of God's almighty power in redemption and creation, such questions might not be necessary, or be of only mild academic interest. But the question has a profound existential relevance, for humanity inhabits a world in which divine power seems weak, erratic or absent, with other powers holding sway. The would-be fundamentalist therefore confronts the proclaimed tradition of God's supreme sovereign power with a belief and hope, yet is surrounded by contrary evidence. Inevitably, the problem must be solved as it usually is for most fundamentalists, either by reference to eschatological dynamics (which must remain mythic-speculative)[2], or by resorting to a complex, systematic dualism: both can be located in Wimber. Ultimately, Wimber's work offers a satisfying and plausible ontology for his followers. His own optimistic cheerfulness, immense productivity, coupled with his deep sensitivity, may also help to assuage any doubters in his ranks.

d. Categories of Power in Wimber's Works

Wimber has not developed any particularly specialised or arcane vocabulary for discussing power, and neither has he laid out any formal typology for the different kinds of power he speaks of. Therefore in the interests of clarity, some attention needs to be paid both to his terminology and typologies are therefore proposed: (i) the power of God and the empowerment of the Christian, (ii) 'power points' - agents for energising, and (iii) power as authority, over nature, super-nature and the Church.

(i) The Power of God and the Empowerment of the Christian

When Wimber writes or speaks of 'the power of God', of 'spiritual power' or 'the power of the Holy Spirit', he has something in mind that is not usually discussed in politics or sociology. The same would be true for his language concerning the power or empowerment of the Christian. In fact, the 'of' is crucial: Wimber sees a certain type of power as belonging entirely to God, to be dispensed with as He wills. As such, it is something beyond social or political enquiry, although social and political consequences naturally arise from its use. Thus for Wimber, there is a

real dichotomy between sacred and secular power. The two only really engage in conflict ('power encounter') for Wimber, when secular power - in the form of institutions, tradition, etc. - actively prevents the operation of divine power. Though even here, as we have already hinted, Wimber invests such enounters with a sacred-satanic interpretation rather than sacred-secular.

Thus, the double-dualism (sacred-satanic, sacred-secular) provides Wimber with a framework for speaking of a type of power that belongs to God alone, although it can be passed to or through Christians, who then become agents for that power, provided they cooperate with its intentions [DSG, pp. 144 ff]. In turn, Wimber locates the operation of divine power, though not the subject of divine power, firmly within the category of outwardness. For Wimber, God is the one who wishes to achieve certain things via his agents, in order to demonstrate his love and his power. In an interesting passage in The Dynamics of Spiritual Growth, Wimber illustrates this in his attempt to describe the person of the Holy Spirit, not just his works.' Yet the attempt fails altogether: what describes the personality of the Spirit for Wimber is just a long list of what the Spirit does, and each of these activities has its orientation in outwardness. For example:

> He provides resurrection power ... He empowers and guides us in our witness and service ... He produces spiritual growth ... [DSG, p. 133].

Thus, the power of God is something posited in the Christian as a means of expanding God's economy of productive activity. This economy is ultimately a conformist one, (some would say coercive), in which everything is responsive to manifestations of power in accordance with how that power would wish it to be so. Christians do not therefore, have much choice about how the power of God is to operate: they must simply remove any personal obstacles to that power, and prepare to be filled by it. This activity will always result in an outward movement either into the secular or against the satanic, resulting in a 'power encounter' which will confront further blockages to the power of God.

This rather vacuous notion of what Christians are for is persistent throughout Wimber's works. Instead of humanity being co-operatively and creativley used in their individuality and corporality by the Spirit, they simply become 'tools'. (This mechanistic image of Wimber's, used to refer to the gifts of the Spirit, also, ultimately, refers to the wielder of the tools.) Consequently, the role of the Spirit is reduced to that of a transformative force or tool in the hands of God, devoid of personality, individuality or real nature. The only place for an 'inward' (or free-relational) role for the Spirit is in 'witnessing' or 'convicting'; yet these things themselves will only be shown to be genuine if they result in outward, visible signs of the inward event. Christians are thus agents of God's power, which is a force or energy that 'attracts us to Jesus' [DSG, p. 131]. Indeed, such is Wimber's view of the power of God in its relation to the Christian, that he writes: 'God's intent is to transform us into replicas of his Son'.[2]

(ii)'Power Points': Agents for Energising

Given that Wimber sees the Christian development as being the progressive objectification of the Spirit and the progressive domination of all that might hinder this [DSG, pp. 134 ff], we must inquire as to how this might be achieved. The short answer is, via agents that effectively communicate the power of God to their intended goal. To explain this, Wimber employs some of his most specific power language, by referring to what he calls 'power points':

> Power points are based on our interaction with objective markers of core Christian truths that direct us towards maturity; if we follow them well, they change the direction of our lives.[3]

Wimber's 'power points' are moments in which radical transformation takes place, resulting in a new knowledge of God or experience of his power. Thus, the acquisition or understanding of 'power points' gives the believer 'power to' do more, or greater energy. So, the outwardness of the Christian's power, given by God, is stimulated by other agents, (such as a fundamental principle), also given by God. Hence, Wimber continues (note my underlining):

> they [power points] are experiences of God's truth that boost us along, that catapult us towards maturity ... [they] raise our vision and sense of calling. Elevated vision in turn creates an expectant, highly motivated environment.

The rather vacuous notion of power, humanity and the person of the Holy Spirit previously discussed is here alleviated by providing nodal points that the Christian can grasp, which provide a series of steps or levels, which might indicate the level of power that is potentially operative in the individual. The believer does not simply have to be open to the power of God, with no thought to the consequences. This could easily lead to disagreement over what was the objective sign of power in the community and the individual and what was not. Instead, what the believer has is a power or energy network, a series of inter-connected 'points' that convey power, each with its own heart of biblical truth [DSG, p. 5]. The task of the

believer, in their desire to progressively reify the power of the Spirit in their lives, is connected to the power points in such a way that the energy from within them might dispose of its transformative power. For example, a commitment to a form of biblical inerrancy is said to be a 'power point', since not believing in inerrancy would 'undermine our confidence' [DSG, p. 40] in Scripture as an agent of God's power.

Thus, we can see that Wimber's terminology for fundamental articles of faith can actually be expressed in terms of 'power points'. For Wimber, it is via these points that God offers either steps or a path into his power. When they have been grasped or 'mastered', the believer ascends into a greater experience, expression and understanding of God's power. As such, the fundamentals require a response: they are the points through which God offers his empowerment, and as agents of power, must be engaged with if progress is to occur. However, the 'power points' appear to have no power of their own: Wimber does not advocate the independent power of inerrancy, doctrine or the like. These things are only power points insofar as the grasping of them leads to a greater experience of God's power. So, as with the individual believer in the previous section, these objective markers are also somewhat vacuous: objects waiting to be used for empowerment as a means to progressive activity.

(iii) Power as Authority: Over Nature, Super-Nature and the Church

We have already hinted that intrinsic to Wimber's idea of power is a notion of conflict. The power of God is operating in the life of believers, but its full potential is not realised because of natural resistance, supernatural resistance, or confusion over structures and priorities (authority). Each one of these will be dealt with in turn.

It is important to begin by noting that Wimber does not articulate any theory as to the limits of God's power. Therefore any resistance to its goals or directionality can be overcome if the individual or community 'takes authority' over the particular problem. Most commonly for Wimber, this is focussed in the area of healing. Wimber does not believe that all illness is satanic in origin: he regards it as a condition of human nature

which entered creation via 'The Fall'. However, the victory of Christ on the cross for Wimber necessarily indicates that what is apparently natural may no longer be preeminent over the supernatural. The power of Christ can heal everybody, provided the right methodology is employed. Those who are not healed have simply not been correctly or adequately exposed to the power of God [PH, pp. 139 ff].[4] The power of God is therefore a seal of authority over what is natural and normal, and the task of the believer is to claim, realise and practise that authority in everyday situations, as, it is claimed, Jesus did himself. [see Healing, pt 1 and 2, tapes 1 - 6]

Power as authority is also manifest in the supernatural realm, where again, Wimber calls for believers to exercise their God-given authority in the form of power, by resisting the devil.[5] Although Wimber ascribes tremendous powers, both to Satan and to demons, he sees the power of God as being consistently triumphant, since the power has an authority that other powers do not possess. The nature of this authority is essentially that of controlling. If the right techniques are employed for, say, a deliverance, the demon must ultimately comply with the wishes of those praying, since they may 'bind and loose' in the name of Christ. These observations are important for our inquiry, since they suggest that the power of God, in the form of authority, can be realised in any conflict, with a positive, progressive result.

Similarly, in the Church, authority is form of realised power. Only when individuals have 'submitted' to principles, and placed themselves under the authority of leaders or certain principles will empowerment follow.[6] The power of God therefore lies in the authority of its agents. To question their authority is tantamount to questioning the power of God. Consequently, non-acceptance of authority results in not receiving empowerment, and therefore being exposed to the elemental (natural and supernatural) powers of the universe, with appropriate consequences.

The three overall categories of power offered in this Section can only be a basic guide for the moment: more detailed analysis will follow. We can see however, that the power of God in Wimber's thinking is extremely conflated with that of the agents he suggests it arrives by. Given his

view of God's power - outward, progressive and authoritarian - we must now turn to the central questions this thesis addresses.

e. Selecting the Appropriate Questions

Having briefly examined the categories of power at work in Wimber's thinking, we must now frame more precisely the questions about power which form the nucleus of our investigation. The questions which initially led to the pursuit of this study centred around how best to read, systematise and interpret contemporary Christian fundamentalism. The thesis therefore presupposes a general dissatisfaction with the way in which theology usually engages with fundamentalism. Using Wimber as a case-study, what is being suggested is that fundamentalism is best interpreted via a theory of power: how it is understood by a given community, how it is controlled, held and disposed of, and what its source, nature and directionality look like. So, the overall question might be summarised thus: 'What evidence is there to suggest that the phenomenon of fundamentalism - in all its various forms - arises out of an attempt by an individual or community to receive, reify and reflect divine power, via a sharp and distinctive focus on the subject that permits a type of exclusive identity to its adherents?' Inherent in this question are a number of related power questions which have already been partly touched on, helping to form part of the discussion.

Given this, these are the key questions - set out below - the thesis sets out to address. All the questions relate to the heuristic framework proposed for investigating contemporary fundamentalism, with John Wimber as the case study. Questions 4 - 8 relate more or less directly to Chapters 3 - 7. Questions 1, 2 and 3 are of a more general systematic nature, question 3 being perhaps the most central, and have been partially interrogated in Chapters 1 and 2, and will be referred to regularly, as well as being dealt with again in the Conclusion.

1. Is power a thing in itself, a property, or is the word merely conventional shorthand for denoting social relations directed towards goal-attainment?

2. Assuming God is all-powerful (i.e., Lord, Almighty, etc.), how is this power revealed and mediated? Is it disposed of unequivocally (e.g. "zap!")? Or does it for example, tend to surface plurally, perhaps as the result of developing social relations?

3. What is the relationship between divine power and the kind of power we see exercised in human societies? Indeed, is it possible to distinguish between the two? Must divine power always be mediated through agents (e.g., event, person, charisma, etc.)? What are the consequences of such conflations for theology and social organisations?

4. How can power be understood in society? How is Charisma an agent of power in such situations? By what means are individuals persuaded to accept and operate within new kinds of power structures? What of the mutuality of power in the 'charismatic situation'?

5. How are individuals nourished in these new power structures? What is it about the exercise and experience of power that makes it so compelling?

6. How is the power of God known today, and what evidence is there for it? How does divine power empower individuals, and what is the effect? Is the power of God demonstrable?

7. How is power reified in the life of the Church in its inner life and in its witness to the world? How does the church organise its power?

8. What does Wimber's theology of power look like? What are its strengths and weaknesses? What are the implications for the study of fundamentalism?

Given Wimber's interest in divine power, as well as attending to his ideological and historical location, these questions can be appropriately put to his work and works. Some of the questions arise directly out of Wimber's own agenda; others emergy from the 'dialogue' between my own concerns and those of Wimber's fundamental corpus. For example, Chapter 3 deploys sociological methodology, in order to demonstrate how power is

understood in Vineyard communities, and show how it operates. Chapters 4 - 7 develop the observations arising out of the first three Chapters, and use them for interacting with Wimber's work and works. Chapter 4 examines the ideology that funds the community in its relationship to God and the world, focussing on the worship that moves and motivates adherents. Chapter 5 specifically engages with the (claimed) evidence for God's power and activity, and looks at, amongst other issues, the function of dualism in the enabling power of the community, especially when there is crisis or 'power- failure'. Chapter 6 probes the ecclesiology proposed by Wimber, and questions the structure and value of the 'power church'. Chapter 7 summarises Wimber's theology of power, and offers a rigorous critique of the source and goal of his work. The Conclusion attempts to validate the theme of power as a way of interpreting contemporary Christian fundamentalism, and ultimately offers some suggestions as to how future research into fundamentalism might proceed, via a greater degree of systematic and theological engagement.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

Section (a)

1. See M.Foucault, "Space, Knowledge and Power." (interview). Trans. Christian Herbert, in The Foucault Reader, Ed. Paul Rainbow, New York, Pantheon-Random, 1984, p.247. For a similar but more systematic perspective, see "The Subject and Power" in Michael Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics, by H.L.Dreyfus and P.Rainbow, Chicago, University of Chicago, 1982, pp.208-216.

Section (b)

1. Cheryl Forbes, The Religion of Power, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1983, p.54. See also R. Quebedeaux, By What Authority?, San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1982.
2. Forbes, The Religion of Power, p.17.
3. Ibid., pp.58-59. Forbes has in mind here so-called 'possibility' or 'positive' thinkers, who, she claims, influence American evangelicalism. An interesting example of this, though obviously not mentioned by Forbes, would be Roland Griswold's, The Winning Church: Church Growth and Evangelism for Today, Wheaton, Il, Scripture Press, 1986.
4. Forbes, The Religion of Power, p.60.
5. Ibid., p.86.
6. D. Hardy and D. Ford, Jubilate: Theology in Praise, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984, p.21. Hardy and Ford differentiate between 'order' and 'non-order', the latter term denoting a freedom and an overflow which is neither chaotic or destructive; rather, it is a form of harmony aligned to the Spirit that 'blows where it wills', with its ultimate directionality always returning to focus praise on Jesus.
7. Ibid., pp.79ff.
8. Paul Cain, Paul Cain at the Vineyard, Anaheim, Vineyard Publications (6 audio-cassettes: no manual), 1989, tape 2, side 1. Cain specifically mentions that criticism or judgement of himself or Wimber will open the individual 'to a lot of judgement and severity' (from God). This severity might include hardship or sickness; at one point he says 'those who oppose the prophetic will die'. He warns that family and friends may also be affected by the actions of an individual critic. Similarly, Bob Jones, another of the 'Kansas Six', claims that God speaks to him annually on the Jewish Day of Atonement. In Jones's own terminology, the Lord places him "under the Shepherd's Rod" and gives him a message for the whole church for the coming year. Jones's 1989 "Shepherd's Rod Prophecy" gave an interesting account of why so many prophecies go unfulfilled: '[God] said, "If I release the hundred-percent rhema right now, the accountability would be so awesome and you'd have so much Ananias and Sapphiras going on that the people couldn't grow; they'd be too scared".' (Cassette tape, Kansas City Fellowship, October 1989).

9. 'Slain in the Spirit': a relatively modern expression denoting a religious phenomenon in which an individual falls down; the cause of this is attributed to the Holy Spirit. The phenomenon is also known as 'resting in the Spirit'. It is generally held by proponents of such phenomenon that the experience is traceable to Protestant revivals since the time of Wesley. Modern exponents of the phenomenon (besides Wimber) have included Francis MacNutt, the former Dominican Priest, Benny Hinn, a popular revivalist, and Kenneth Hagin, the founder of the 'Rhema' movement in the USA.
10. See A. McFadyen, The Call to Personhood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.207.
11. See K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, vol.4, bk.2, Chap xv, p.648: 'The true growth which is the secret of the upbuilding of the community is not extensive but intensive; its vertical growth in height and depth... It is not the case that its intensive increase necessarily involves an extensive. We cannot, therefore, strive for vertical renewal merely to produce greater horizontal extension and a wider audience... If it [the Church and its mission] is used only as a means of extensive renewal, the internal will at once lose its meaning and power. It can be fulfilled only for its own sake, and then -unplanned and unarranged- it will bear its own fruits'.
12. Stephen Sykes, The Identity of Christianity, London, SPCK, 1984, p.208.
13. Edward Farley, Ecclesial Reflection , Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1982, p.232.

Section (c)

1. J. Wimber, Power Evangelism, p.37.
2. I would bear this out in the following way, in the table below. The observation of a particular manifestation is listed on the left of the page, and the contrasts denoted by; a. = 18th Century revival; b. = John Wimber's work and works.

CONTRASTS IN REVIVALS

(i) Particular attribute of God being focussed upon: a. the holiness of God, and the need for individuals/the Church to be likewise; b. the healing power of God, and the need for individuals/the Church to be likewise.
(ii) Primary needs of respondents to message: a. sins forgiven; b. to be physically/emotionally healed and/or empowered.
(iii) Falling down at meetings, or being 'slain in the Spirit': a. individuals usually fall on their faces, as in the Bible [Matt 7:16, Luke 5:8, Acts 9:4, 1 Cor 14:25); b. usually on their backs.
(iv) When the manifestation occurred: a. during preaching; b. mostly after preaching, during a 'clinic'.
(v) Attitude of preacher: a. Wesley did not encourage the phenomenon, and often ignored it; b. very much encouraged.

(vi) Congregational proxemics: a. people fell down on their own, sometimes involuntarily, or as a conscious response to a particular conviction; b. individuals fall down once others have gathered around them and prayed for them during a 'clinic'.
(vii) Reaction of preacher to people being 'slain in the Spirit': a. Wesley claims he ignored them or had them carried away; b. fallen person becomes focus of activity, since this is where 'the Spirit is resting'.

Of course, this table does not mean Wimber is bogus in his claims to divine power: it simply shows the discrepancies in his hermeneutics. We must also note the extensive work done by sociologists and historians of revivalism in the last twenty years. Many now distinguish between modern revivals (post-Finney), and those before. Finney's Lectures on Revivals of Religions (1835) provided Free Churches with a practical handbook on how to organise a revival. See R. Carwardine, Transatlantic Revivalism, Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn., 1978: 'By the 1850's in most evangelical churches a more calculated, more obviously "worked up" revivalism had replaced what traditionalists regarded as "waiting for God's good time".' (p.xiii).
3. The analogy Wimber uses is that of the D-Day landings, June 1944. The victory of Christ and the Church is compared to that of the Allies. From 1944 onwards, Hitler's downfall was assured, but he was not yet defeated, so suffering, occasional defeat and setbacks continue until the war is finally won. The Church, claims Wimber, is embroiled in a similar struggle. More recently, the historical-military metaphors have been 'mapped' onto the Korean war of the 1950's, as a means for explaining a radical dualism. It is claimed that the Communists left 'suicide squads' in South Korea, whose sole purpose was to kill and maim. Demonic activity is associated with such squads: a defeated, trapped enemy, still operating in conquered territory, with often deadly consequences.
4. Power Points, manual with tapes, 1982, p.43.
5. See for example G.E. Ladd's The Presence of the Future, London, SPCK, 1980. (Originally published as Jesus and the Kingdom, New York, Harper & Row, 1964). Chapters 1,6 and 7 seem to be echoed in Wimber's treatment of eschatology, which I discuss in Chapter 6.
6. E. Troeltsch, The Absoluteness of Christianity, London, SCM, 1976, p.60.
7. Questioning the power of God ultimately threatens to break the operating hermeneutical circle of any community. For example, if Biblical inerrancy is pressed by fundamentalists, faith is implicitly denied, since only a commitment to inerrancy can guarantee faith.
8. Troeltsch, The Absoluteness of Christianity, p.60.
9. See J. Wimber, The Kingdom of God in the Last Days, Anaheim, Vineyard Publications, 1989: 12 tapes plus syllabus.

Section (d)

1. J. Wimber, The Dynamics of Spiritual Growth, p. 129. See also R.A. Torrey, The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1974, p.9.
2. Dynamics of Spiritual Growth, p.3. Wimber attributes this comment to C.S.Lewis' discussion of the transformation of humanity found in Mere Christianity (London, Collins-Fount Editions, 1977, pp.180-181). However, even a casual reading of Lewis in this instance does not suggest the word 'replica' is appropriate.
3. Dynamics of Spiritual Growth, p,4.
4. Wimber lists reasons why people are not healed (Power Healing, p.164), including: not enough faith in God, unconfessed sin, unbelief, incorrect diagnosis of problem or poor prayer method. If any of these symptoms occur in either the healers or the persons desirous of healing, it is held that healing might not take place.
5. See for example J. Wimber, Spiritual Warfare, vols. 1, 2 and 3, Anaheim, Vineyard Publications [27 audio-cassettes plus syllabus].
6. J. Wimber, Paul Cain at the Vineyard, tape 5, side b. See also Dynamics of Spiritual Growth, p.6.

CHAPTER THREE

POWER AND AGENCY

1.a. Introduction: Some Perspectives on Power from Social Sciences

In ecclesiology, and perhaps to a lesser extent theology, power has been a neglected, even despised, concept. The common error of over-simply equating power with coercion has meant that theology has been reluctant to find a legitimate place for it in its doctrine. Embarrassment over the reality of power often leads to the concept being cloaked or misrepresented by associational rhetoric: 'authority', 'Lordship' or 'headship' would be just some examples. Evidently, before we can work with concepts like power and power structure in fundamentalist communities, we need a broader understanding of power, and for this we must turn to social theorists and philosophers. Once we have a grasp of how the concept functions in organizational theory, we can bring it back into theology, and fundamentalist thinking, in order to see if we can make use of it.[1]

However, before beginning our discussion of power, we ought to clarify our terms of reference with regards to the concept of agency. A preliminary definition was advanced in Chapter Two, but it is now necessary to be more precise about the usage of the term. Working on the assumption that it is not possible ever to encounter the pure power of God, which would, presumably consitute meeting God (himself) face to face, theologians have to accept that God is encountered through agents of that power. These agents can either be of divine origin, as in, say, the case of creation, or they can be of human origin, as in, say, the case of a work of art. I am not denying here that the artist is inspired: The artist is the human agent through which God's grace flows, creating another agent, namely the work of art, which allows others to encounter God. Of course it is sometimes difficult to decide what is a human agent, and what is a divine one, particularly in fundamentalist communities, where the power of God is often conflated with other powers at work in the community. For example, charisma has an ambiguous identity as an agent in Wimber's Vineyards (see

section 2.c. of this Chapter). More straightforwardly however, we can see the distinction between divine and human agents quite clearly in Wimber's work. For Wimber, designed 'Programme Evangelism' is a human agent, through which the power of God can work. He clearly sees this as inferior to 'Signs and Wonders', which he regards as an originally divine agent, which is given to the elect for use to draw humanity into the power of God.

We should not be surprised at this sharp distinction. Actually, fundamentalists tend to treat their primary agents for delivering divine power as (virtually) divine agents. Thus, an inerrant Bible is seen as a 'God-given' agent in the same way that 'Signs and Wonders' might be. However, the methods for using these agents or interpreting them are widely regarded as examples of human agency. In all cases, the primary function of an agent is twofold: (i) to reify power, and (ii) in so doing, to control people, doctrines, standards, etc., by the exercise of that power: that is to say, produce a result, product or benefit as a result of its exercise. When the term 'agent' or 'agency' is used in this thesis, the following assumptions can therefore be made: when the term is linked to (i) fundaments, divine agency is implied; (ii) methods or programmes, human agency is implied, and (iii) concepts such as charisma, there is conflation between the divine and human. How though, does this discussion connect with ideas about power?

There is a debate among theorists of power as to whether the concept does necessarily involve the idea of coercion, or whether coercion is only one form of power or one way of using power. Some thinkers make power and coercion almost synonymous: for example, Sidney Hook says, 'What differentiates "power" as I shall use the term, from mere influence, authority and persuasion is the element of constraint or the threat of constraint that is integral to its meaning'.[2] However, Hook represents an extreme; most writers, even if they find that the concept of power has, at a foundational level, something to do with coercion, would include authority, persuasion and influence as types of power. Dennis Wrong, for example, includes all these and defines power as 'the capacity of some persons to produce intended and foreseen effects on others'.[3] Others opt for an even broader definition: John Silber reaches back to Plato's

equation of power and being (in the Sophist) and concludes, 'When we recognise that power is the ability to affect or to be affected we shall be able to recognize the family resemblances of power in its many forms, including the concept of force and the concept of authority'.[4]

It is this 'positivist' definition of power which is most useful in organizational analysis, particularly when 'reading' fundamentalist theology and ecclesiology. The limitation of the concept of power to coercion might attract some critics of fundamentalist thinking, but I hold that such a strategy is simplistic and narrow. Indeed, even the limitation to the production of 'intended and forseen effects' - the 'productive theory' of Denis Wrong - has unfortuate consequences, since it inevitably focusses on reification (i.e. the result of power, or product of its exercise), but will tend to eschew ontological considerations. As Stewart Clegg has pointed out, understanding power structure in organisations requires a positivist definition rather than ones which depend on intention; 'The individualistic and subjectivist concept of power cannot aid us in this kind of analysis. It merely disposes us to treat illusion as reality'.[5] For our purposes, since we are hoping to develop a perspective on fundamentalism as (at least) an integrated set of power-concerns, we shall simply be treating power as a fact: where things occur, there we see power.

The illusion of which Clegg speaks is that of individual power,[6] the idea that individuals make social change by their intention. While Clegg's early work was perhaps extreme in its insistence on the power of structure (including the ideological template), his point has won widespread acceptance: increasingly, many scholars understand that changing the actors, even those in positions which seem very powerful, may do little or nothing to change the 'system'.[7] A new Pope, a new President, a new chief executive or a new fundamentalist pastor, will still have to work within the same old structure. The structure, the system itself, is powerful; beyond, even despite, the intentions of individuals, it affects what happens.

Power is thus a multi-faceted phenomenon. It is structure, resource, creativity and perversion. As Silber remarks,

> Power in its ontological meaning is good. That is, to the extent that power is being and being is good, there can be no power that is not in that sense good, and the more power the more being. It grows with fulfillment. Put theologically, in creation God shared His own power by extending it, or created more power by creating new being ... The evil of power consists not in its being, but in the way that it is used.[8]

Silber's transition to a theological mode is helpful to our purpose, allowing us to foresee how power connects the theological and sociological realms of discourse. This is especially true in any careful analysis of fundamentalism. In this light, the omnipotence of God, the Lordship of Jesus, the power of the Spirit, the inerrancy of Scripture, and so on, become images, not of coercion (at least not exclusively or primarily), but of generation. Thus, power and being, as we have already suggested, are not to be divided artificially: In this respect, we are not far from Aquinas' notion of God as 'actus purus' (i.e. perfect actuality or actualization). At the same time, we must not lose sight of the Scriptural witness to power: it is not something inert, like a stone, that can be examined at our ease. In keeping with our 'positivist' understanding of power, we can only 'see' and 'read' power as it is used and understood by a community. As Silber points out, it is not the being of power which is in question. What is subject to theological evaluation is power as a process, (its use and abuse) at theoretical and practical levels, within fundamentalist communities.

1.b. Addressing Some Aspects of the Nature of Divine Power

There is no agreement among social scientists about how power language is to be read. There are no definitive experts to consult, and theologians must find their own way amongst the many treatments of power available. Among the works which proved to be initially useful was Dennis Wrong's Power: Its Forms, Bases and Uses,[1] which offers a good standard treatment of power at a theoretical level, to which we will return. As a working definition of power with which to begin, however, Max Weber's is still adequate. i.e., that power is:

> the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis upon which this probability rests.[2]

With this definition, a penumbra of qualifying terms begin to develop around the bare word 'power': social relationship, will, resistance. More will follow. The inference that there may be many different bases for the probability of one actor's supremacy points to the truth that power occurs in many and varied forms. The work of social scientists reflects this variation to a large degree.[3] Yet a survey of contemporary social science literature on the subject of power is beyond the scope of this thesis. What we are seeking to do is to provide a context for elucidating how fundamentalist thought and action is to do with power, via the use of John Wimber as our case-study. To this end, I have turned to the work of sociologist/theologian Peter Berger in the first instance, in order to assess Wimber's strategy in addressing the nature of divine power.

Berger's work stands out sharply in contrast to that of other contemporary thinkers. When theologians write about divine or spiritual power they usually do so with hesitancy and imprecision. discussions often concern themselves with institutionality, authority or the appropriate place of service Even those who have become critical and urbane about social and political power continue to handle spiritual power in a simple manner.[4] By radicals it can be 'debunked' and declared only to be a mythic legitimation of the altogether human power of religious institutions. By

fundamentalists and the unsophisticated orthodox, it is celebrated as kind of magical electricity, offering deus ex machina solutions, and though phrases like 'the power of the Holy Spirit' may be scattered liberally around, actual discussion of the nature and method of operation of divine power tends to be sparse and stereotyped. Theologians who do not fall foul of either of these extremes are usually preoccupied with what divine power can and cannot do, and how it is reified.[5] Yet the subject is of vital importance apologetically, and theologians and fundamentalists alike must all address the issue at some point.

Berger maintains that whenever fundamentalists or theologians attempt to deal with the phenomenon of the power of God and of the spiritual power active in and available to believers, varying strategies are adopted. His book, The Heretical Imperative (1980) makes a valuable attempt to systematise the chaos. Though having a slightly wider frame of reference than that of divine/spiritual power, his work is nevertheless fully applicable to this area. Most appropriately for our discussion here, with reference to fundamentalism, Berger begins by noting that the strategies are apologetically orientated and originated in their desire and design to combat the apparent problems posed by pluralism, and the general secularity attributed to modernity. Berger posits that there are three main approaches to the problem, and in studying these, we can reach a better appreciation of the context and method of Wimber's attempt in this field, and of other fundamentalists.

Dovetailing with our chosen methodology, Berger takes a phenomenological starting point. Experiences of the supernatural and sacred create ruptures in mundane reality and give rise to new perceptions of the self and others. Echoing Weber's 'routinisation of charisma' theory, he notes that religious experience, which is initially self-authenticating, inevitably over time becomes embodied in religious tradition which becomes an authority, supported by social institutions, consensus and control [Berger, The Heretical Imperative, pp. 46 - 48]. But, he notes, our situation, the religious situation of modernity, is one of pluralism, of a choice to be made from among competing traditions. This

poses a threat to the realness, security and objectivity of each and all traditions.

Berger's emphasis on the challenges of pluralism and modernity fits Wimber's situation well, in common with other fundamentalists. As we noted in Chapter One, fundamentalism is a counter-cultural phenomenon, a reaction against aspects of the modern situation that are deemed to threaten or undermine religious faith. In the face of the threat of pluralism, Berger outlines three possible strategies which will enable faith to be defended. The first is the deductive possibility, in which:

> the tradition is affirmed anew, after an interval when it was not affirmed. The problem is, quite simply, that it is very difficult to forget the interval ... This is why neotraditional and neo-orthodox movements come with particular vehemence ... [p. 68].

Berger cites Karl Barth's Protestant neo-othodoxy as an example of this first possibility, in which the Word of God is the datum of Christian theology. Faith in the Word is the starting-point: there is no way there, no method of knowing God, no natural human capacity to know God. Only the Word gives one the capacity to affirm it [pp. 74 ff]. Christianity's uniqueness and validity are simply given, a priori [pp. 83 - 84]. Because it has been questioned in liberal Protestantism, the authority of the tradition must now be reasserted with greater force. If one can accomplish this, the gain is one of cognitive certainty, and one can once again deduce propositions from the old tradition [p. 79]. At first sight, this first possibility/strategy might appear to be a good description of fundamentalist methodology, but as I shall show shortly, this is not quite the case. Undoubtedly, aspects of fundamentalist strategem look like this, but as an exhaustive account of fundamentalist methodology, it is inadequate.

The second response suggested by Berger is the reductive possibility. Starting from the assumption that modern consciousness cannot accept the supernatural (and the assumption that this consitutes an epistemological advance), but desiring at least to salvage the core of the tradition, this strategy engages in 'cognitive bargaining' and effects a 'translation' of

the supernatural elements of the mystical tradition into a variety of guises. Sometimes it can be ethics or mystical experience, a common feature of some classic liberal exponents. Tillich's Love, Power and Justice (1953, London, OUP) is a good example of such an enterprise. Unable to cope with a purely divine ontology and its consequences, Tillich reconstructs the desirable goals of a holy community life around a united ontology of love, power and justice, with God as its (somewhat detached in my view) ultimate source [pp. 11 - 17, 107 ff]. This is Tillich at his economic optimum, salvaging a worthwhile, constructive faith via a reductive strategy that purports to advance the essential elements of a human faith. If the translation is not into ethics or mysticism, other arenas are possible: existential (e.g. Bultmann), popular psychology (e.g. Norman Vincent Peale and other Americans of the 1950's), or politics (e.g. liberation theology) [Berger, pp. 111 - 117]. Here the a priori's are the cognitive superiority of modern consciousness [pp. 119 ff.] and the conviction that if 'the gods' are indeed discovered to be symbols of human realities, then this implies nothing but symbols [pp. 121 - 123]. As with the first strategy, there are aspects of fundamentalist methodology that 'fit' the second possibility that Berger describes. Some of the mechanistic tactics and theology of the Church Growth Movement appear to have originated from a thorough reductiveness that places a great emphasis on productivity. The work of Donald McGavran, for example, certainly reduces the task of the Church to being that of the community that fulfills what he calls 'the Great Commission' (Matt. 38: 16 - 20). The effectiveness of the Church can be measured by its ability to achieve certain goals, which, it is claimed, God is attempting to reach (e.g. 'making disciples of all nations').[6] However, although reductiveness is sometimes a feature of fundamentalism, fundamentalism itself is not necessarily primarily 'a modernising of the tradition' as Berger describes. In addition to this, fundamentalists would not share the notion that their God was simply the symbolic desideratum of human reality, as some reductive thinkers and strategies might be prepared to acknowledge.

The third response is the inductive possibility - a moving from tradition to experience. When the tradition comes to be questioned, this strategy seeks to trace back to the religious experiences which began it.

Thus, historical development and the analysis of religious phenomena become important. Taking human experience as a starting point for religious reflection, the inductive strategy generally uses the methods of historians to uncover those human experiences which have become embodied in the various religious traditions [Berger, pp. 125 - 126]. A paradigmatic example of such an enterprise would be Schleiermacher's liberal Protestantism [see Berger, pp. 127 ff]. However, Berger cites Adolf von Harnack as the single most representative figure of the inductive-historical impulse in nineteenth century Protestant theology [Berger, pp. 137 ff], searching for the essence of Christianity, that is, the core experiences that gave birth to Christianity, and can sustain it in the present if they are re-evaluated.

However, when the issues of spiritual power and the inductive strategy are brought together, there appears to be two different ways of practising the inductive strategy, the differentiation of which has implications for our study. The first is intellectual and analytical - like that of Harnack - and fits easily into Berger's description: through history and reflection on the historically-given religious experiences of humanity, one can seek to describe the core-experiences of divine power. But there is a second variant to the inductive strategy that also deserves the adjective inductive. It is more active, and emphasises the possibility - indeed, the necessity - of confirming and supplementing historical analysis by seeking direct religious experience at first hand. Such an approach is typical of many mystical sects. But crucially for our study, it is also characteristic of fundamentalist and charismatic writers, who attempt to authenticate traditional truth-claims about the power of God by demonstrating that power in the present. Thus, the second variant of the inductive strategy is a good 'fit' for our definition and analysis of fundamentalism. Obviously, in Wimber's case, truth-claims are validated by 'signs and wonders' Yet the strategy also fits non-charismatic fundamentalists as well For example, those committed to rigorous biblical inerrancy also seek to confirm the power of God in the present by pointing to the effectiveness of scripture in its capacity to change lives. Thus the power of God is here validated in words, unlike Wimber, who authenticates by manifestations.

We must note here that Berger repeatedly reminds his readers that religious experience is self-authenticating at the time, but that the authentification has a tendency to fade over time, especially when the experience is only known second hand. (Here again one detects overtones of Weber's 'routinisation of charisma' theory). This variant of the inductive strategy posits the repeated necessity for the availablity of that kind of authentication This can be traced quite clearly in Wimber's career: the constancy of pursuing signs and wonders in an expansive manner that suggests that God's activity is co-incidental with the growth of his Vineyards. Consequently, there tends to be less emphasis on argument and interpretation in these types of fundamentalist communities, and more on biography. This in turn can lead to aberrations in the quest for direct experience, as serious theological reflection can often suffer in the journey. Yet as we have noted before, the existence and widespread influence of the inductive strategy - particularly in fundamentalist groups - in approaching the subject of divine power, renders it worthy of serious study.

Berger's three strategies therefore prove to be a reasonable 'fit' with the ways in which theologians and fundamentalists approach the task of affirming divine power in a milieu where acceptance of its reality can no longer be taken for granted. Barth and neo-orthodoxy generally follow the deductive strategy, using the language of power about God easily and unashamedly, with few attempts to explain what is meant by or <u>how</u> that power impinges on this world. In this respect, no advance is offered vis-a-vis the new intellectual and cultural milieu created by modernity or pluralism, beyond re-asserting the orthodox tradition.

A few adopt the reductive approach: in addition to Bultmann, Feuerbach and Overbeck offer the most obvious examples. More recently, Walter Wink's <u>Naming the Powers</u> (1984) and <u>Unmasking the Powers</u> (1986)[7] take a primarily reductive approach to the subject of 'principalities and powers' and 'the invisible forces that govern human life'. Berger offers Norman Vincent Peale's <u>The Power of Positive Thinking</u>[8] (1952) as a paradigmatic example of reductionism, stating that Peale 'translates' the divine story into psychology, and ultimately into principles of growth and wholeness for the

individual. Here I would take issue with Berger over his representation of Peale. In Peale's writings - in common with other later fundamentalists in the 'positive thinking' mould, such as Robert Schuller - the supernatural referent is not absent from his writings. Neither is it reduced to a formalistic ackowledgement, something one might be able to accuse Tillich of. Peale's writing certainly focusses on the way the power of God affects the lives of individuals, and he deliberately couches his books in non-religious language in the interests of maximising the accessibility of his work to the widest possible audience. Yet Peale never reduces the 'power of God' to 'the power of positive thinking'. On the contrary, the reason Peale's methods of positive thinking (which have antecedents in some quarters of ancient Christian spirituality) are effective is because they are methods for immersing oneself in and thinking about the power of God. The focus on religious experience and the retention of the supernatural or true-transcendent referent in authors like Peale and Schuller make it more reasonable to bracket them among practioners of the third, inductive strategy (second variant), in the company of other fundamentalists like Wimber.[9]

As we shall establish later in this thesis, Wimber's approach to the subject of divine power - in common with other fundamentalists - can rightly be labelled as primarily inductive, and bracketed with Berger's second variant. While Wimber and other fundamentalists undoubtedly retain elements of a deductive strategy at times, perhaps most notably in biblical exgesis, and as well as sensing reductive overtones in the mechanistic ecclesiology of fundamentalists,[10] it will be seen that Wimber's unwavering allegiance to a divine referent places him firmly in the inductive camp, as does his continual striving to discern the core-experiences (signs) which give rise to a productive type of Christianity. We shall also note Berger's critique of the vulnerability of the inductive strategy, namely its perennial problem of certainty.[11] Given these observations on how divine power is addressed, it is now appropriate to assess theories of power-organisation, with their role in the social construction of reality.

1.c. Power in the Community

In any community, the forms of power are clearly many and varied. How divine power is addressed will usually dictate how the community is formed to some degree, so in this section, we shall be searching for a sociological framework that makes sense of the existing inductive strategy we have already identified. In assessing various forms of power, we can see that questions of intentionality, effectiveness, balance, and latency can never be fully solved. Power - be it allegedly divine or human - is sometimes consciously mediated through coercion by authority, or some other form such as persuasion Equally though, power lies dispositionally at the heart of any religious polity, although it can be traced via agents or facilitative processes. And yet, the mediation of a form is not always necessarily a conscious act on the part of leader or subject. What we can say about power is that the combinations and interrelations of forms demand a multi-dimensional appreciation, if we are to understand the anatomy, operation and possible identity of power within a given fundamentalist community like Wimber's. So it is to a concept of circuits of power I have turned,[1] following the work of Stewart Clegg (The Theory of Power and Organization, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, and Frameworks of Power, London, Sage, 1989), in an attempt to examine the character and framework of power in Wimber's community structure.

Part of the problem in solving questions about the identity, forms or anatomy of power, is that theorists have often persisted in thinking of conceptions of power in unitary terms, in which all issues of theorization must be resolved In the past, such approaches can be traced in a variety of guises, and it will be worthwhile briefly dwelling on the outlines of such approaches Writers like Weber, Wrong and Russell[2] have tended to focus on questions of intentionality with respect to power. This field of exploration, with its roots in the work of Thomas Hobbes,[3] tends to focus on sovereignty and instrumentality, and concerns itself with such things as causality, agency, the organisation and implementation of rule, domination and exertion Against this, and perhaps beginning with Machiavelli,[4] writers such as Dahl, Mills and Hunter[5] have questioned whether it is

really possible to say that power is held by individuals over society. Machiavelli stressed strategy within structure to comprehend and interpret it, rather than activity that constructed and defined structure. Following this, Dahl especially doubted whether it was accurate to speak of something as unmeasurable as intention, and preferred to see power as being something that was to do with all relationships power is something dispersed to the many, rather than a few.

Bachrach and Baratz[6] have subsequently identified these (somewhat artificial) distinctions, the one stemming from Machiavelli, the other from Hobbes, as 'the two faces of power'. Developing what they saw as two distinctive interpretative frameworks, they asked questions about inertia, not simply exertion: what about 'non-decisions', and the 'mobilisation of bias?'[7] The debate over power was given a new impetus in 1974, with the publication of Lukes' Power. A Radical View, in which Lukes took leave of the two-dimensional argument, and pressed for a view that encompassed three. What essentially characterizes this three dimensional view is a focus on 'interests'. Effectively, Lukes substituted a moral philosophy for a philosophy of power, in which 'interests' emerge with a sort of irreducible nature. Consequently, power for Lukes takes on this three-dimensional shape. Behavioural concerns may be one dimension (positivist), intentionality-in-action questions a second (conventionalist), with the third being an evaluative theorization of the interests in intentionality of action (Kantian realist?). But even a writer like Lukes,[8] who has done so much to further our understanding of power through his three-dimensional model,[9] still regards the dimensions as layers of a single conceptual structure. It is against such unitary views of power that I wish to argue here, in order to develop a concept of power circuits using the work of Clegg, that will adequately examine the power-centredness of fundamentalists like Wimber.

It should be clear by now that any generally applicable theory of power will also be a theory of organisation. Much of the theory of organisations has been orientated towards explaining how organisational obedience is arrived at.[10] This could lead us into a great deal of organisational analysis, but that is not entirely necessary for our

discussion here We will later note the features of Wimber's organisation in Chapter Six, and the apparent absence of a 'still point' in his theology (unless it is connected to power or control), which means the terrain of his ecclesiology and missiology is constantly shifting, unstable and usually always in motion. And yet behind this, a field of force in which power operates has somehow been fixed - possibly via the inductive strategy referred to by Berger - which contains Wimber's principles and agents of adherents. So, in spite of the apparent lack of a still point, or centre on the surface, there are certain 'nodal points' or fundaments of belief and practice which conduct and direct the forces or forms of power within Wimber's theology and ecclesiology (we will show in the conclusion that these revolve around power and control). These nodal points can be ones of either rationality (e.g. inerrant text or person) or of efficiency (e.g. signs, charismatic leadership), or a combination of the two, culminating in the nodal point being one of ultimate legitimacy. These nodal points need orchestrating at times by controllers or power-brokers (i.e., leaders), but equally, they exist within a single movement together partly because of the way in which they naturally belong together. There can be, for example, simple linear links in the power chain, such as a pathological approach to Church Growth theory being aligned with a concern for individual bodily health.'[11] Or, there are more complex patterns, which link individual obedience with freedom, and in turn, link freedom with clearly marked boundaries, the crossing of which, it is said, represents the capitulation of freedom (i.e., usually to the devil, or sin). Thus, we have a framework in which obedience and resistance can coexist and compete, yet still retain adherents within a power network.

Central to our discussion of circuits is the concept of agency. Agency is something that is achieved. it is active operation, action and the instrumentality or organisations. Agency is something which is achieved by virtue of organisation whether of a human being's dispositional capacities or of a collective nature. In short, agency, or the achievement of effective agency, is the stabilising factor in circuits of power, and thus of organisation, agents are invariably mechanisms for control. The incorporation of agencies within organisations is normally secured on the basis of contract,[12] although that contract need not be reciprocal,

conflict-free or equal. An example of this from within our fundamentalist case-study may be of some help here, to illustrate my point. The organisation of Wimber, Vineyard Ministries International (VMI)[13] is a body that orientates itself around its agencies, that is to say, what it sets out to achieve. Members of his organisation are both agents of signification, and agents of production: agents relate to the agency, which seeks significance and productivity. Both are inextricably interlinked: to separate them would be to focus on only one side of the conditions of organisational participation. Thus, we cannot view Wimber's network of churches as simple phenomenal expressions of some essentialist inner principle such as religious exploitation or a distorted form of biblicism and idealism. An organisation is, like any other locus for the accomplishment of agency, a place of individual and multi-participative decision and action.'[14] (This echoes our earlier observation in Chapter One, concerning fundamentalism being a complete cultural-linguistic system) General theories of power do not explain the politics of organisations such as Wimber's Organisational action is an indeterminate outcome arising from the competing agencies: people who deploy different resources or spiritual gifts, people whose organisational identities will be shaped by the way in which disciplinary and membership constraints work through and on them, people who seek to control and decide the nature of organisational action and identity. Consequently, the interests of actors in organisations and the decisions they make are contingent upon the various forms of organisation calculation. Thus, organisational action is not the expression of some essentialist inner principle. claims to such principles necessarily neglect the complex and contingent conditions under which organisational action occurs.'[15]

However, if a theory of agency is pressed too far, with too much emphasis placed on liquidity, the search for some of the essences within Wimber's work and works could easily be lost in a sea of relativity. Without wishing to contradict the earlier argument, although it is not possible to locate a fundamental inner principle at the heart of an organisation, it is possible to suggest the points by which Wimber might orientate himself This observation leads us to suggest that within the concept of agency, there is room for some 'strategic agencies'[16] which will

necessarily involve those agencies establishing a primacy within an organisation. As Clegg points out:

> To achieve strategic agency requires a disciplining of the discretion of other agencies: at best, from the strategist's point of view, such other agencies will become merely authoritative relays, extensions of strategic agency.[17]

As Weber was well aware, an army is the ideal form of this. The troops, as relay-agencies, subordinate themselves to the strategically subordinating agency. In the same way, P.D. Anthony has observed that 'soldiers of God'[18] have often been the highest expression of obedient organisation membership. In the thinking of Wimber, with 'church growth' and reifying the power of God in the community as the supreme targets, it is not difficult strategically to subordinate almost every aspect of Christian life and witness to this goal. 'Signs and wonders' have to connect with church growth, as does healing, deliverance and prophecy. And behind the stratagem of church growth is a cluster of nodal points whose locus centres around a belief that the church should be powerful (as it is said, God is), both as a sign that God is with the organisation and inhabiting the strategies, and also because of the explicit connection between power and productivity.

The connection between agency and (dominant) strategic agency actually raises the central paradox at the base of power relations. The power of an agency is increased in principle by that agency delegating either tasks or authority. The delegation can only proceed by rules, and rules necessarily entail judgement (by both parties), which, potentially at least, empowers the delegates. From this, arises the tacit and taken-for-granted basis of organisationally negotiated order, and on occasion, its fragility and instability.[19] Thus, to operate in this paradox, there is a vested interest on the part of the leaders in 'normalising' the agencies concerned, and in particular, the dominant strategic agencies. We will see in Chapter Four how the peculiar use of ideological language in worship contributes to this goal, in helping to establish the agencies and orientations of Wimber as routing affairs within the organisation or church concerned. And such adherence to the now established normal goals of the

part of those being led, although resulting in a kind of subordination, also brings with it a form of space. As B. Barnes puts it, such agencies

> must recognise that the output of appropriate action which they produce is what minimizes the input of coercion and sanctioning which they receive.[20]

Power is thus implicated in the form of authority, and framed within rules. The interpretation of rules within an organisation must be disciplined and regulated if new powers are not to be produced, and existing powers eroded. In the case of Wimber's Vineyards, it is in the permanent interests of the strategists to promote the primacy of organisation. Failure to do this, to establish authority and limited subjugation, could only in the end result in the overturning of stuctures that mediate power, and the powers that mediate structure.

It has been implied from the start of this section that an appropriate point of departure for the analysis of power is not pure agency, but rather the social relations (Power as the expression of Community) which constitute effective agency, particularly where it is organisational in form. In fact, the field is somewhat broader than this: consideration of the relational field of force in which power is configured is required, recognising that one aspect of this configuration is the social relations in which agency is constituted. Thus, the key to our understanding is to grasp the fact that power as a phenomenon can only be comprehended relationally.[21] Power is not a 'thing'; pure energy may exist, but it may (usually) only be known and held as it is relationally constituted. The relational conditions which constitute power are reproduced through the fixing of obligatory points, channels and boundaries. Only then can power be fixed and 'reified' in form.[22]

The greatest achievement of power is its reification. We have already suggested, following Adams,[23] that leaders within fundamentalist groups like Wimber's are types of 'power brokers'. But they are more than that. They are reifiers, energy converters whose task it is to turn mass (e.g. the congregation) into energy, and energy into mass (e.g. concrete results). The very act of rationalising the congregational process and

animating the social will is in itself an act of reification. And it is precisely because of this process that we can say that power and resistance always stand in relation to one another. Power always involves power over another, and thus at least two agencies, and therefore resistance. This resistance, like the power itself, provides frameworks or circuits in which the power is processed or reified. Because resistance necessarity involves relationship, there is a consequent field or structure within which energy can flow.

We have reached a point in our discussion now when we can say with some confidence that to speak of 'power centredness' or talk of a 'dominant power paradigm' as a way of reading fundamentalism is actually an over-simplification. Certainly, in our preliminary theological and historical analysis, it was possible to locate a general interest in maximum power. However, as we have seen in this discussion, power as such, is really only a word that describes a series of relational processes. As a concept, it has no meaning on its own. Concern for power is an agency in itself, a dogmatic nodal point within the circuit of Wimber's work and works, relating to other fixed points such as productivity, effective mechanism, defined exclusivism and a series of linked dualities. The ordering of these axiomatic relationships is done by a socialisation of 'rules' that maintains energy flow. Yet although power may only exist relationally, we cannot agree with Daudi who claims that 'power as such may not exist'.[24] Equally, it is vital to move from the facile assertion of Wrong that power is simply(!) a capacity.[25]

Power is inextricably linked to structure and is represented in the circuits of framework in a number of ways. Power is evidently present as each specified modality of episodic, dipositional and facilitative power. It is also present in the overall flow of action through the circuits of power, the relational articulation which will constitute the calibration of this flow. Power can be contained within circuits, or flow through it, and it is the strategic agencies that determine the rate and direction of flow.

In conclusion, because no power or form of power is an island, entire or itself, the framework of circuits of power can be used effectively to

discuss the emergence and state of Wimber's thinking and communities that does not leave us hostage to formulae of dimensions, faces, dialectics or levels. The model of circuits of power is capable of carrying analysis in ways that other models are not, with the additional advantage that secondary materials within a coherent framework can be incorporated in order to address some of the central issues at the heart of fundamentalism. It also allows us to see that the inductive model for addressing divine power as suggested by Berger, is in fact a way of understanding the power-flow in fundamentalist thinking, as well as being a nodal point in its own right in the overall circuit of power that is operating. Given these observations, we must now briefly suggest some potential results that might occur from using both Berger and Clegg together.

1.d. Evaluation: Reflections on the Ideology of Personal Access to Power

Participants in fundamentalist movements operate on the assumption that individuals in the movement have direct personal access to knowledge, truth, and to the power of God. This is most clearly expressed in Pentecostal and charismatic forms of religion, that look to the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a significant empowering ability derived from God. It enables the believer to receive spiritual gifts (i.e., permits entry into a circuit of power in which other types of power may be experienced), as well as increasing the believer's understanding or sensitivity to God's will or nature (i.e., the inductive strategy). Thus, any 'Spirit-filled' Christian can relate not only to God effectively, but also to their community and movement, and to the world beyond. In short, within fundamentalism there is a direct appeal to individual access to the source of power via the inductive strategy, which in turn is held ideologically and sociologically by a matrix of circuits that verifies and legitimises the use of power.'

The combination of the inductive strategy for understanding divine power, along with the model of circuits of power for explicating fundamentalist social and ideological organisation, allows us to make two critical observations that interconnect. Firstly, the inductive strategy for addressing divine power is actually a self-validating framework. If, for example, 'signs and wonders' are a confirmation of God's activity and approval, the task of the community is to observe and discern them. The inductive strategy, where practised by fundamentalists, already tells participants that the power of God is available to them: what is needed is observable or reified evidence of this. Thus, if a prophecy is given which subsequently does not come to pass, it will be held by the community concerned that it actually has come to pass, but differently than expected:

to deny this would be to deny the power of God, and threaten the very foundations of the community, who claim to be able to receive it directly and personally.[2]

A second observation concerns the typical ideological and social hermeneutics of fundamentalists. The model of circuits of power implicitly suggests a circularity of beliefs that interconnect. It is quite proper for us to speak of a hermeneutical circle within fundamentalism, derived from both Berger and Clegg's work. For example, Wimber's work on healing, (the task of the Church and the power of God) suffers from precisely this problem: 'power failures' are accounted for via dualism or sin, successes attributed to the faith of believers or the sovereignty of God. Personal responsibility for failure (or success) is therefore subordinated to the dominant hermeneutic or circuit. So, if fundamentalism is to be partly understood as an attempt to reassert total omnipotence through controlling agents, how does this come about? Especially since the full power of God is not (we hold) ever encountered? One solution is to elevate human agents (e.g. the Bible) to a divine status, or, secondly, conflate human and divine power in a more ambiguous controlling agent, such as authority or charisma. Given these observations, it is now appropriate to test this thesis by assessing the role of a particular power agent in the inductive-circuit model: that of charismatic authority.

2.a. Introduction: Reflections on Charismatic Authority as an Agent of Power

We have already made reference to power being something that arises out of a complex series of matrices or circuits. If this is true sociologically for fundamentalism, it is also true historically and theologically. Various types of fundamentalism occur precisely because of the complex inter-reactions in a given community between belief and society, plurality and identity, culture and tradition, to name but a few. Take for example, the rise of contemporary charismatic renewal in the British Isles. Its own theological-historical matrix is traceable initially to Pietism and Quakerism, then to Wesleyan holiness and revivalism, through to early twentieth century Pentecostalsim, and finally to the work of Bennett, Du Plessis and the Fountain Trust in the late 1950's.[1] Of course, each of the individual movements that have combined to cause modern British charismatic renewal had their own distinctive emphasis, yet they nevertheless form part of a new matrix or circuit for the present, through which power is now partly understood for those inside the movement.

It is thus possible to speak of historical or theological 'nodal points', which offer boundaries, pivotal points (switches) and places where participants in a given movement might locate power. As we have noted before, the nodal points themselves may function chiefly to affect rationality or efficiency in the circuit. Sometimes however, it can be both, and it is upon such a nodal point as an agent of power that we shall focus here Because we are concerned with the conflation of divine and human power in fundamentalism, it seems appropriate to centre on a key area where this is particularly reified. that of the office of leader or guru - the person (or persons) who ultimately controls or guides a given fundamentalist group. In the case of Wimber, we shall see that his charismatic authority is a necessary[2] power agent that funds the inductive power circuit that defines his particular form of fundamentalist belief and practice. Without the agency of charismatic authority, the control issued to the power circuit would breakdown, and as such, we can speak of

Wimber's charisma as being a nodal point of power conflation, in which the opus dei and opus hominum are merged to the extent that Wimber's charisma cannot be distinguished from that of the Spirit. The study of charisma is of course, over seventy years old now. So, this cannot be an exhaustive survey of all theories on charisma. The purpose of introducing charisma into the thesis at this point is to demonstrate how one nodal point in the power circuit functions, with respect to the overall understanding of power within fundamentalism. Once this is achieved, we can begin to examine in subsequent Chapters how various behavioural or doctrinal aspects function similarly.

2.b. Some Contemporary Sociological Theories: A Brief Survey

It is most appropriate to begin this survey with Max Weber: his work is perhaps the germinal study in explaining the sociological implications of charisma.[1] Weber is largely responsible for introducing the term to the literature of sociology, although its origin was religious. Weber borrowed the term from Rudolf Sohm, who used the term in an analytical treatise of religious organisations entitled Kirchenrecht[2]. Sohm coined the word from his transliteration of a work used by the apostle Paul to mean 'gift of grace'. Weber applied the word to his sociological treatment of types of authority. For him, there were three types: rational-legal, traditional, and charismatic authority. In so doing, Weber set apart the charismatic leader as having a personality unlike 'ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities'. Weber states that these properties are not accessible to the common leader; they have a 'divine origin'.[3] Such a 'divine' power source needs recognition by those subject to this authority. In other words, the charismatic leader's claim needs to be validated by faithful followers or disciples who see in their leader 'proof' of supernatural qualities.[4]

Consequently, Weber indicates that charisma is an unstable phenomenon. 'The charismatic leader gains and maintains authority solely by proving his strength'. Followers will soon depart from the charismatic leader who cannot 'perform miracles' or 'heroic deeds'[5]. Continued charismatic domination therefore often requires the audience to reject 'all ties to any external order' and to break with 'traditional or rational norms.' In effect, the charismatic leader says "It is written, but I say unto you...".[6], thus lending a revolutionary dimension to charismatic leadership.[7]

Although Weber recognises the subversive character of charisma, in the sense that it usually attacks or transcends the routinization of structures, he nevertheless believed that its residual power could be transformed and applied to roles, offices and insititutions. A charismatic

impulse could develop into a stable 'movement' in its own right. Provided there was continuity in tradition and succession, coupled with new phenomena that could be appreciated for its own dynamic and charismatic power,[8] a charismatic leader could spawn a charismatic movement that would flourish. The conditions for such a leader arising (with a following), were, in Weber's view, 'subjective or internal reorientation born out of suffering, conflicts or enthusiasm'.[9] Thus, for Weber, charisma is essentially a supernatural gift that has originated from beyond the personality of the leader; it is a religious phenomenon, though with political ramifications because of its link with authority. Charismatic leaders need devoted followers to validate their calling, and that validating process needs constant maintenance in the form of miracles or works of power if leadership is to be maintained. Eventually, therefore, charisma becomes routinized in offices or roles, in organisations that have a strong identity focussed around the importance of power and performance.

Another way of expressing this would be to speak of charisma being a nodal point in a power circuit. Weber himself would not have expressed his theory like this, but we can see that he is the right starting point for the discussion of sociological theories of charisma Numerous writers have subsequently developed and redeveloped his approach, and an exhaustive survey of them is not possible or appropriate I have therefore selected five post-Weber-charisma-theorists, in order to show (briefly) how his agenda have been followed up in the field of contemporary sociology. The five are Arthur Schweitzer, Guenther Roth, Edward Shils, William Friedland and Martin Spencer.

Arthur Schweitzer was arguably the first sociologist to bring together Weber's view on charisma, and knit them together into a consistent theory of charisma.[9] Responding to the criticism that Weber's religious orientation to charisma has little application to non-religious contexts, Schweitzer defends Weber by stating that for Weber, a special calling could imbue a charismatic leader with a feeling of destiny or fate quite apart from any religious origin.[10] He asserts that charisma may be validated by the interaction and reinforcement of the self-confident leader and the devoted followers:

> 'Personal charisma - sense of calling and self-confidence - becomes valid because of the leader's capacity to perform exceptional deeds and the sense of duty of the followers to accept his claim and follow his leadership.'[11]

Building on this, Schweitzer suggests that the emotional appeal of the leader (driven by inner calling), causes an effectively internalized response in the audience: ecstacy, euphoria, shame and resentment can be generated when there is an emotional bond between leader and led.[12] Charisma can be further endorsed by a 'New Style' advocated by the leader: it can be exemplary living of some sort, religious, political or social, or some other similarly inventive innovation that is conducive to the needs of the audience.[13] However, it does not need to become a distinct doctrine or dogma: its power lies not in its permanence of fixidness, but in its non-stability (fluidity), and ability to transfix the audience, and thrill. Lastly, a charismatic figure often has a special mission or programme to accomplish, behind which followers can unite and magnify their own personal and corporate identity.

Schweitzer is aware that his views of charisma do not depart significantly from that of Weber in the final synthesis. Some problems about differentiation remain. For example, it is not clear in the thinking of Weber and Schweitzer, how one is meant to distinguish between various charismatic types: demagogue, ideologist, party leader or prophet. In short, there is no criterion for separating democratically-minded charismatic leaders from those who are dictatorial or authoritarian. This inevitably raises a question over whether or not charismatic leadership is simply a unique form of expression that can be harboured in differing ideological settings.

Perhaps in an attempt to sharpen the theorems of Weber and Schweitzer, and resolve some of these problems, Guenther Roth has looked at the relationship between the charismatic community, the charismatic leader and the 'charisma of reason'.[14] For Roth 'ideological virtuousi' are akin to Weber's 'religious virtuousi'. These virtuousi connote a form of technical excellence coupled with an 'ethic of sheer commitment'. Thus, the emphasis

of Roth's thesis shifts from the leader to the community, the faithful followers who determine and interpret the charisma of their leader.

Roth identifies four major features of the ideological charismatic community: (i) an 'emotional consociation' between a strong leader and dedicated staff, (ii) both members and leaders of the community share charisma - they are 'true believers'; (iii) sheer commitment to an ultimate end is noticeable; (iv) traditional or rational activities are often displaced by interests that serve communistic goals.'[6] In view of these observations, Roth is aware that few charismatic groups exist today outside religious or cultic groups, although they occur occasionally in countercultural political contexts. Roth's point is that eventually, a charismatic group may not require a living personification of charisma. The 'charisma of reason' is routinized, and becomes an 'historical impersonalisation'.

The 'institutionalisation' of charisma is a theme developed in some of the work by Edward Shils, former Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago. Shils' particular interest lay in the 'conditions under which it (charisma) finds a more dispersed focus on institutions and strata and on the properties of roles'.'[6] Shils argues that Weber's 'divine' orientation for charisma does not limit its application to secular situations. Revealing a Durkheimian influence, Shils sees Weber's 'charisma of office' as the 'sacred' (Durkheim's terminology) institutionalised aspect of charisma Awe, respect and devotion can occur in non-sacred contexts, as for example in tribes, human rights movements, or sport. It is the tradition of paying homage to the one who holds the role of leadership that Shils highlights. It could be a bishop of a diocese or a centre-forward in a soccer team: both are examples of institutionalised charisma The charisma exists because authority has been granted in the interests of order and status. This argument of Shils is particularly worthy of note with respect to John Wimber. Charisma is 'bestowed' by followers on a leader, often apart from their own individuality. Whilst there may be interaction between the two, it is important to grasp that charisma cannot simply be a phenomenon that rests solely with the rhetorician in question.

Despite the modifications of Roth, Schweitzer and Shils to Weber's theories of charisma, they remain empirically questionable, since they tend to identify charisma as an essentially psychological attribute of a person. Willian Friedland is the first social theorist to attempt to refocus the definition of charisma as an aid to explaining social change.[17] Friedland points out that, though Weber viewed charisma as essentially psychological, charisma had to be concomitantly 'socially validated' He states that the 'true' charismatic personality may often go unrecognized

> 'It is only when the message conveyed by charismatics to social groups is relevant and meaningful within the social context that authority emerges '[18]

Friedland illustrates charisma in a social context by means of an empirical case-study of modern political and trade union leaders in Tanganyika. He suggests that even though Weber's typology of authority is ideal, behavioural referents should exist in a case study. Actually, Friedland does not attempt such a study, but suggests one should be undertaken. In the context he analysed, he asserts that charismatic leadership developed for three reasons: (i) a majority in favour of action emerged; (ii) leaders chosen were perceived as risk-takers; (iii) 'success' was recognized in the activities of the leaders[19]. In conclusion to his findings, Friedland calls for a sociological analysis of the roots of charisma which should be orientated towards social situations.

The last sociologist I wish to deal with in this section is Martin Spencer. Spencer's work is perhaps the most probing sociological analysis of charisma to date, no doubt due in part to his comprehensive grasp of other theories that address this phenomenon. Spencer identifies three senses in which charisma is contemporaneously used. First, there are the Weberian concepts that focus on the supernatural characteristics of the leader; these qualities are confirmed to a group of followers by means of signs, wonders or miracles of some sort. Second, following Durkheim, there are a cluster of concepts that focus on 'offices', roles or institutions that hold charisma for a group. And third, Spencer suggests that charisma also has a more general meaning, tied in with a magnetic or powerful

personality, which may not be divinely connected. Spenser analyses all three of these perspectives, to see if there is a fundamental ingredient or nature of charisma, on the basis that charisma is a significant social reality.

The main agenda of Spencer's work appears to be to focus on his own paradigmatic probe: 'What makes a charismatic leader charismatic?'.[20] Disregarding Weber's religious dimensions, he suggests that the source of charisma is in the leader's manifestations of 'power', 'mastery' or 'order'. Followers of the charismatic leader are awed by the 'demonstrated capacity of a great mind to make sense of an incomprehensible reality'. The charismatic leader brings a simple order out of complex chaos, and that the embracing of the new order is in some sense a foretaste of the things to come.[21] Spencer also states that a charismatic leader must also bring satisfaction to followers. And satisfaction is frequently achieved by the leader being an able innovator, articulator and symbolizer. Spencer's conclusion is that charisma is not just psychological or sociological. It is both:

> 'Charisma is an affectual relationship between the leader and his followers: the one pole of this effect is awe, the other is enthusiasm ... (Charisma is) the historical product of the interaction between (person and situation)'.[22]

From this brief survey, we can begin to appreciate how charisma functions within the power circuit. In the first instance, it operates as a nodal point that offers a dual signal to its constituents. On the one hand, the power of God in the present is affirmed: on the other, the authority of the leader - as a power-broker - is underlined. Secondly, charisma also functions inductively too: the theological, historical or experiential tracing of charisma and its cources tends to reproduce a form or charisma in the present. Thirdly, charisma is a form of reified power itself: a <u>product</u> of the circuit of power, arising out of the interaction between persons and situations. It tends to become focussed in the ability or office of an individual, and as such, can properly be spoken of as a key or axiomatic nodal point that receives, transmits, converts and reifies power in the overall circuit. Fourthly, charisma is an <u>agent</u> of power, a

phenomenon through which someone or something is affected. As Bryan Wilson notes in The Noble Savages, 'charisma is the occasion for social transformation'.[23] That transformation is ultimately the result of faith, either in a living individual, or in the diffused charisma that might have been bequeathed from a departed leader. To a greater or lesser extent, all functioning fundamentalist groups need a charismatic leader within their power circuit. They can maintain energy flow, monitor it, and ultimately expand it where necessary. The question necessarily arises however: how is this so?

2.c. Towards a Framework for Understanding Charisma as an Agent of Power

None of the theories formulated to date has been capable of becoming a conceptualised heuristic model which describes the dimensions and process of charisma. The purpose of this section is to formulate a framework that sees charisma as a 'process', not simply an 'act'. A process reveals the integral inter-relationships that exist between leader and led. Alluding to this relationship, Thomas Dow states that 'obviously, people must recognise, accept, and follow the pretender before he can be spoken of as truly charismatic. The question is why do they do so?'[1] This section attempts to answer Dow's question, by proposing a framework that offers explanations of 'how' and 'why' charisma operates as a nodal point. But what sort of theory is being proposed here?

Using Leonard Hawes' 'typology of theories' contained in his seminal Pragmatics and Analoguing: Theory and Model Construction in Communication[2], the proposed analogue is a Type I theory. A Type I theory offers explanations of how a phenomenon occurs, as well as providing adequate representation of the phenomenon. Such a theory is often axiomatic in its primary statements, although postulational statements (verification) must be added to support the axioms. From this, semantically valid statements are inferred, with hypotheses derived as a result, which must test the adequacy of the theory. Usually, a hypothesis is derived from a theorem, and then the results predicted in the hypothesis tested against the evidence.[3] There is not space in this Chapter to question the suitability of Hawes' understanding of theories; it is enough to know for the moment, that the framework I am proposing is again heuristic. That is, it suggests questions that could be asked and answered empirically, via the sift - collate - interpret strategy. Yet in spite of this, the framework is for critical research mainly, not empirical. Of course, the framework is replete with positive and negative bonds; as a framework, it is a relational web of concepts. As such, therefore, the framework is descriptive, in its orientation to uncover motive and directionality; the 'how' and 'why' of charisma in a given fundamentalist movement.

Given these foundations for the construction of the framework, three major 'ingredients' of charisma will be employed as the basis for the theory. These three ingredients emerge from the previous discussion of contemporary sociological theorists. The three elements are (i) message, (ii) personality and (iii) speech delivery techniques. This synergistic theory of varied charisma perspectives purports to create a critical framework for evaluating the operation of charisma as a process. Throughout the description of the following three elements, the work and example of John Wimber will be woven into the analysis to illuminate the discussion.

(i)Message Elements

Potential followers may be attracted to a leader by a variety of means. One of these means is a charismatic message. However, the 'charismatic message' itself contains a number of sub-ingredients. Firstly, for example, the message is usually revolutionary in character. That is not to say that a concrete ideology is being proposed that is violent or extreme. It does suggest however, an alternative to the status quo, an alleviant from the present stress or climate. The charismatic message, in order to dominate, and therefore be truly charismatic, must require a 'rejection of all ties to any external order (or message)'[4], so that the message itself becomes the only route of escape from a perceived crisis. In considering Wimber, one is faced with a radical, revolutionary message, that purports to be able to rescue the Church from its alleged (i) powerlessness, (ii) numerical decline ('Power Evangelism'), (iii) inability to manifest 'signs and wonders' in its midst ('Power Healing'), and (iv) distance from a powerful, immediate and accessible God (the 'Third Wave'). These revolutionary ideals are set out in most of his works, and expounded at length in conferences: 'while program evangelism is, to a limited degree, effectual, power evangelism has always been, and still is, the best means of church growth'.[5]

Secondly, resulting from this revolutionary element, it follows that the message must be simplistic. Charismatic communication is frequently characterised by 'grammatical and content simplicity'. The grammatical and

linguistic simplicity of Wimber's message cannot be doubted. True, there is a sophisticated web of simple truths inter-relating in Wimber's work, but this is not the same as complexity grappling with reality, even though to some, they appear to be indistinguishable. Themes that lack complexity in message, often reduce the probability of choosing alternative perspectives. In turn, such perspectives facilitate the charismatic leader's following, who alone is in possession of the 'basic master plan' - the only way to escape the crisis.

Thirdly, a charismatic message usually contains 'figures of presence'. Charisma, as an agent of power, is often dependent on creating an aura of pertinency, apart from the argument itself. 'Presence' may also serve to reduce the breadth of perspective, and orient the charismatic follower to become attracted to the inherent aura of the message. Louise Karon, in her essay in The New Rhetoric, highlights the effects of presence in charismatic persuasion:

> First, it (presence) is a felt quality in the auditor's consciousness. This quality, created by the rhetor's 'verbal magic', enables him to impress upon the audience whatever he deems important. Second, presence fixes the audience's attention while alerting its perceptions and perspectives. Third, its strongest agent is the imagination. Fourth, its purpose is judgement. Fifth, it is created chiefly through techniques traditionally studied under the headings of style, delivery, and disposition.[6]

What Karon refers to as the 'techniques of presence', (Perelman calls them 'figures of presence'), are essentially elements of agreement: they are the argumentative aspects in a message, since their effect is to 'make the object of discourse present to the mind'.[7] Figures or techniques of amplification, synonymy, interpretatio (explanation by expressing another?), sermocinatio (fictitious attribution of words to a person), and dialogism (inventing a conversation). There is also what Perelman calls 'enallage of tense', which he describes as 'syntactical substitution of one tense for another contrary to normal practice'.[8] A subtle example of this in the rhetoric of Wimber is the constant trend in referring to the Church as dead, yet existing.

Fourthly, a charismatic message is dependent on the promulgation of collective identity. A follower who identifies with a message, must ultimately fuse their identity with that of the charismatic messenger. Eric Hoffer points out that the true charismatic leader must evoke 'the enthusiasm of the communion - the sense of liberation from a petty and meaningless individual existence'[9]. The articulated message must say 'what people want to hear, but do not know how to say themselves'[10]. Shared identity in the charismatic situation is vital if the audience are to be persuaded, and not just thrilled.

This leads to a fifth dimension in message elements, namely 'polarised aggression' in the message. This term, employed by Schiffer[11], highlights the charismatic communicator's ability to argue <u>for</u> something, <u>against</u> something. Such a construct requires a characterization of opposing viewpoints, and in the work of Wimber, it is common to find inertia or opposing viewpoints gently ridiculed. He is persuading people to act, to 'do the stuff' (his phrase for <u>literally</u> fulfilling Mark 16: 15 - 18), and anything that interferes with the centrality of foundational commissions is 'dubbed' alien, corrupt or divisive to the common task he feels Christians should be employed in. Such an approach often requires the opposition to be simplified, so its (alleged) falsity can be understood and rejected by the followers. Examples of this include the separating of that which is deemed 'dead' and 'alive', good and evil, or the humanizing of Satan as a personal adversary, anxious to disrupt and destroy the work of the charismatic communicator and the followers.'[12]

The undue attention paid to Satan by Wimber is no accident. A charismatic leader needs an adversary, who can be called to account when the charismatic message appears to fail in concrete terms, and there is a power-failure: a break in the circuit. For Wimber, a strong believer in effective prayer for healing, subject to employing the right techniques'[13], Satan or sin are often the cause of sin or sickness, or contribute to the failure of the healing prayers offered. For example, in the case of David Watson, Wimber's friend and companion, Watson had contracted cancer of the

liver. Despite prayers for healing from Wimber and his associate, Watson died. Wimber's explanation of this is that 'Satan murdered him'.'[4] The five characteristics mentioned in this section on message cannot obviously be the only ingredients in a systematic understanding of charisma and message elements. However, each ingredient cited appears with regularity in various theories of charisma. The leader who creates a message with these elements increases its potential in the overall charismatic situation.

(ii)Personality Elements

It was the work of Weber that probably first highlighted the element of personality in charisma. Although charismatic leaders emerge from different cultures and different situational crises, some common personality traits are identifiable. Some of these will be discussed briefly here. The list is not exhaustive, but as with the section on message elements, these traits all emerge from charisma theorists; a charismatic leader however, need not exhibit each trait, but (usually) the more traits expressed, the greater the appeal of the charismatic leader.

The first to mention is 'High Status'. This status can be achieved either through routine ways (office, role or position), or through the ability to demonstrate miracles, signs and wonders In either process, 'charisma routinization' takes place, which moves the leader to a position which is exalted above that of the group A second trait directly emerges from the first the leader has a 'stranger quality' about himself or herself. To maintain high status, it is necessary to have some distance from the group, though too much could be alienating. Perhaps the proverb 'familiarity breeds contempt' has a corollary: something strange yet familiar breeds charisma. Certainly, in the case of Wimber, both traits are exhibited. His charisma is dependent on his total control of conferences (always billed as the main speaker), and tight, but limited control of his network of churches (Vineyards). However, he keeps some distance from the ordinary affairs of his churches and conferences, thus heightening his mystique and charisma in the eyes of the audience.

In contrast to these remarks, a third trait is the exhibition of 'conquerable imperfection'. Wimber, in spite of consciously or unconsciously building his charismatic image, is at pains to stress his ordinariness: 'I'm just a fat man trying to get to heaven', he proclaims. But this is not a 'truth claim', although he is a large man. Rather, it is a device that helps endear the audience to the man Similarly, he speaks movingly of his own illness, whilst encouraging others to engage in a ministry of healing. In the words of one of his own songs, he is the 'wounded soldier'.[15] This is conquerable imperfection. The third trait is balanced, indeed made tolerable, by a fourth trait: that of a 'special calling', a leader can 'cause an effectively internalised response because he can generate ecstasy, euphoria, resentment, and politically relevant passions in his followers who feel united ... by an emotional bond'.[16] This trait can be further endorsed by a fifth, namely sexual mystique. Jimmy Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart have both shown this; that the sexuality of the charismatic leader is of absorbing interest to immediate followers, not just the general media. Whilst Wimber has a 'stable' sexual identity (wife, children, grandchildren), many of his personal prophecies for others (often called 'words of knowledge') concern adultery or fornication, these 'words' are shared with large audiences, or written about, despite their personal nature. Within the leadership team of Wimber, however, there is considerable variety in sexual mystique, ranging from Paul Cain (an angel appeared to him in his youth, told him God was jealous of his girlfriend, and he must now remain pure 'From that day on, he has experienced no erotic thought')[17], to Blane Cook, Wimber's deputy and heir-apparent, dismissed from his pastorate in 1988 for sexual misconduct.

A sixth quality is the ability to act, and behave in a dramatic, professional way. Wimber's conferences, although relaxed, are 'slick'. There is an order about the drama that feeds the charismatic situation, aiding the persuasive process. Seventhly, an innovative lifestyle or approach is required, which operates out of this ordered drama. Wimber's principles operate out of these personality traits which are visibly incarnate in the conferences themselves. His teaching calls for an innovative way of life that leads to numerical church growth. The final two traits to mention are 'miracle working' and 'myth-making', or

symbolizing Attention has already been drawn to the essentiality of miracles for Wimber, in his understanding of evangelism. No matter how good the communication, miracles and results will be demanded of the leader who functions in the charismatic situation; the production of success - the reification of power from the circuit - validates the message. To compensate for the possible lack of success, it is therefore necessary to provide a mythical or symbolic 'backdrop' to the charismatic situation, which will provide a framework for constructing reality. Myths, when properly established, can be a rhetorical means of creating 'consubstantiality' with an audience. These traits, of course, are not exhaustive. To complete the framework, it is now necessary to turn to elements of delivery.

(iii)Delivery Elements

Ann R. Willner claims that 'nearly all leaders for whom charisma has been claimed have also been described as eloquent, or spell-binding orators. Charismatic appeal involves investigating not so much what a leader says, as how he says it, i.e., the style of his verbal communication'.[18] The three categories of speech delivery considered here represent elements that many theorists have mentioned as aiding charismatic perception. Each category has sub-characteristics that have been observed in speech delivery amongst charismatic leaders. The three to be discussed are vocal force, vocal inflexion, and non-verbal language - 'body language', and other gestures.

Vocal force is a general term that describes such delivery techniques as volume variety, pitch variables, stress on words, and so on. Erwin Bettinghaus' study of political campaigners and revivalists in Persuasive Communication[19], notes that a bond is often developed between audience and leader by means of vocal cues. Speaking softly, in a concerned voice, invites the audience to listen more attentively, and share the concern. Shouting or ranting can often be a vocal cue that suggests imminent action, outrage, or condemnation. The vocal force of the leader has an impact on the reception of the words that are being spoken, facilitating the charismatic process. In this respect, Wimber is a marvellous rhetorician.

His use of vocal force is nearly always appropriate to the desired goal of his rhetorical output. Stories that illustrate healing for example, move in a typical vocal pattern. Usually, the condition of the person and the sickness is articulated in a depressed, resigned, hopeless sort of way, helping to underline the helplessness of the sick person. The healing process is described tentatively, exemplifying the risk or faith involved. The result (success) is described in excited tones, with the pitch and speed of speech delivery rising all the time. The effect of the vocal force is to move the audience, from resignation to faith, and from faith to excitement and expectancy.

Vocal force is complemented by vocal inflexion: rapid responses, pauses and repetition. These devices often forestall critical analysis, preventing the construction of alternative perspectives. Repetition of theme, phrases and slogans (e.g. 'Keep on doin' the stuff!') reduced alternative thought patterns; the audience is sucked into the logical coherence (or power-flow of the circuit) of the 'neat phrase' that seems to be widely applicable and appealing. Emotional states can be aroused in an audience by the use of pace in speech. Slow talking conveys seriousness, methodic teaching, 'the main message' to remember. Rapid talking can convey a variety of things: emotion, excitement, 'fresh news', and so on. Again, Wimber is no stranger to these techniques. Stories and testimonies, or narrative renderings of portions of the Bible, are spoken with speed. The more systematic aspects of his principles are spoken with more care, and in a slower fashion. In both cases, variation of pace assists the overall process of charismatic persuasion.

Thirdly, situational non-verbal cues can arouse emotional responses as well. Audiences seeking a charismatic figure respond to the 'body-language' of leader-communicators. For example, physical attractiveness can aid charismatic perception. Mark Knapp states that:

> it is not at all unusual to find physically attractive persons outstripping unattractive ones on a wide range of socially desirable evaluations, such as success, personality, popularity, sociability, sexuality, persuasiveness ...[20]

Wimber is neither attractive nor unattractive. A man in his fifties with grey hair, and overweight, he nevertheless manages to convey an aura of 'cuddliness' (is there a better word?), a man who hugs his grandchildren, but large enough to look imposing if displeased. Charismatic figures like Wimber use hand and body gestures to emphasize dramatic qualities: jabbing, pointing, pounding and fist-like patterns with the hand, link with facial expressions and overall body posture. Clothes can also make a statement about the charismatic leader. Rosenfeld and Civikly note that 'we select fabric and colour to help us conform to our self-image'.[21] Swaggart and Bakker wore expensive suits (suggestion: successful, sincere), Aimee Semple McPherson a white shroud (suggestion: pure, angelic). Wimber wears casual clothes; usually a shirt and sweater, and plain trousers and shoes. The suggestion is that this person is relaxed, friendly, possibly even neighbourly. The audience can therefore also relax; most people attending his conferences, I have observed, dress casually.

Touch is also part of the process of non-verbal communication. Tactile communication is often a vital element in the charismatic-persuasion-process. Touch is the 'language of love and acceptance', according to Sidney Jourard[22], in which intimate mutual identification can take place. In the charismatic situation, this can be especially so. Throngs of people yearned to touch Jesus Christ, so that miracles of healing might 'flow' from him. This phenomenon is widespread today in Pentecostal circles, or in 'faith-healing' services. In the case of Wimber's churches, due to a peculiar accident of history, people who are praying for healing often do not touch.[23] Nevertheless, close proximity, gathering round a sick person, hugging and affirming by touch are all encouraged.

It should be repeated at this stage that these messages, personality and delivery characteristics of the charismatic communication situation are not prescriptively specific for every charismatic situation. All sorts of variables in cultural settings and environmental crises create unique exhibitions of charismatic phenomena. But charismatic impact and persuasion are increased with the presence of each identifiable

characteristic. How though, is this theory of charisma a 'framework' that provides greater insight into the power of circuit of Wimber's fundamentalism? Returning to the the work of Leonard Hawes, I would like to suggest three major ways.

Firstly, a theory can evolve into a conceptual framework if it adequately functions as a descriptive agent. A framework is constructed precisely because no one theory exists that can adequately cope with reality. A collective synthesis of theories, built into a framework, can describe a form of behaviour that a less collective approach may fail to do. Secondly, a framework must be explicative. The proposed framework here attempts not only to establish charisma as a nodal point in the power circuit, but also to explain it. In doing this, it is possible to offer new, testable theories within the framework that are themselves testable. Thirdly, the framework must be simulative; it must be representative of the material covered, if it is to be a fair process of the processes analysed. It is my view that the framework offered here fulfils Hawes' requirements, and our stated desire for a heuristic methodology. Our 'primary statements' (axioms) are assumptions about message and delivery elements, situational crises, and so on. And these axioms represent empirical, semantic or syntatic statements, verified by scholars noted in the discussions to date. Clearly, the framework has to correspond properly to the subject being analysed. In the case of Wimber and his fundamental principles, I have offered a framework that is descriptive and explicative, and foundational for the subsequent analysis. Charisma, as defined and explained in this section, emerges as a key ingredient, agent, or nodal point in the power network. That agent, by mutual consent (mostly), is a controlling mechanism that reifies power to the individual, community and, ultimately, to the one who has the charisma.

2.d. Evaluation

We can begin our evaluation by noting that the framework of circuits of power can be used effectively to discuss the emergence, state and directionality of a given fundamentalist group, in a way that does not leave us hostage to other ways of describing power. In the past, the discussion of power has often been characterised by notions of interest, coercion and reduction, or has followed the various existential formulae of dimensions, faces, levels, dialectics and other sundry concepts. The model of circuits of power not only carries analysis in a way that these earlier formulations do not; it also allows the incorporation of diverse secondary materials - as we have just seen with the discussion of charisma - within a coherent framework, in which issues of theology and sociology can be addressed. Following Clegg and Berger, I therefore propose that there are at lease three implications for our study.

Firstly, we may note that agents of power within fundamentalist communities - be they people, texts or 'signs' - can only be understood in terms of belonging to a wider scheme. True enough, there may be considerable conflation between the agent and the actual source of power for the believers, but the agents themselves are best seen as enablers or forms of brokerage. Focussed attention on an agent of power permits further manifestation and reification of power for the community. Thus, charismatic authority can never be an end in itself, or simply a coercive tool: as a phenomenon, it functions both strategically and symbolically within a wider power circuit.

Secondly, the inductiveness of Wimber is best understood in the light of the circuits of power model. Although we shall later discuss aspects of his pure inductive strategy, it functions for most of the time in a circuitous fashion. What I mean by that statement is this: for most fundamentalist groups, it is necessary to confirm belief by direct experience or reification of God's power. But actually, this process works both ways. power manifestations must be tested via beliefs that are held to be discerning. It is here that the inductive circuit is born. It is

equally true for the historical exegesis of fundamentalists, and also for their eschatology or prophecy. In other words, power in the present authenticates the reading of the past or the future. Thus, fundamentalism can be a forward looking legitimation, as well as backward; that is, circuitous

Thirdly and finally, the model of circuits of power, functioning here inductively, 'fits' the overall heuristic methodology proposed. Reading Wimber's work and works in this manner allows us to identify and critique particular points of belief or behaviour without losing sight of their consistent relatedness. The social and theological effects of power in his message and method can then be assessed, and appropriate conclusions drawn.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

Section 1 (a)

1. This agenda was begun in a preliminary way by L.P. Gerlach and V.H. Hines, People, Power, Change: Movements of Social Transformation, New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1970. Gerlach and Hines analysed pentecostalism and the black power movement, idenifying how organization, recruitment, commitment and ideology functioned. Their thesis however, lacks a thorough-going explication of power in its own right. In a forthcoming book by Stephen Sykes he argues that a form of the strategy I propose is a vital theological and ecclesiological task.
2. Sidney Hook, 'The Conceptual Structure of Power - An Overview' in D.W. Harward, ed., Power: Its Nature, Its Use and Its Limits, Boston, G.K.Hall & Co., 1979, p.5f.
3. Dennis Wrong, Power: Its Forms, Bases and Uses, New York, Harper & Row, 1979, p.2.
4. J.R. Silber, 'The Conceptual Structure of Power - A Review' in Harward, Power, op.cit., p.193.
5. Stewart Clegg, The Theory of Power and Organisation, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979, p.45.
6. Ibid.
7. See Stewart Clegg, Frameworks of Power, London, Sage, 1989, for a more developed view of 'systems'.
8. Silber, op.cit., p.192.

Section 1 (b)

1. A second edition of this volume appeared in 1988, published in Oxford by Blackwells.
2. M. Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, London, Macmillan, 1964, pp.152ff.
3. The following three examples illustrate my point. Michael Mann, The Sources of Social Power, Cambridge, CUP, 1986, offers a theory of political/social power based on the different means of organisations to promote goal-attainment. This approach however, neglects those powers which are generated in the first instance within individuals rather than between persons and groups. Rollo May, Power and Innocence, New York, Norton & Co., 1972, offers a more individual, some would say psychodynamic approach to power and powerlessness in the individual. Robin Lakoff, Talking Power, New York, Basic Books, 1990, offers a theory of power based on the performative value of language in its social setting, with special reference to women's rights.
4. See for example, Leonardo Boff, Church, Charism and Power, London, SCM, 1986. No disrespect to liberation theologians is intended here. An emphasis on the powerlessness and risk necessarily involved in the incarnation is to be welcomed, as is a stress on the unique character of the power of God. But if that is only used comparatively, as a tool to undermine existing power structures, one has to question the epistemological gain of such an exercise.

5. See for example the work of Charles Hartshorne, especially his Omnipotence, and Other Theological Mistakes, New York, NY State Univ. Press, 1984.
6. Quite why Matt 28:16-20 is deserving of the title "The Great Commission" is a puzzle. This is not a phrase Matthew employs himself; it seems to have originated in the early Nineteenth Century, during the peak of European Protestant Missionary expansion. Each of the Gospels offers a rival version of "The Great Commission". Mark 16:15-18 is Wimber's usual choice, because of its reference to 'casting out demons'. Luke concludes his Gospel with a Great Commission (Lk. 24:44-49). John has several commissions, of which 18:34-35 and 19:21-24 are perhaps most notable. However, we should note that the Gospels are clear about what is the 'Great Commandment' (MK 12:28-34, etc), which Jesus seemed to think should serve as a missiological, ecclesiological and theological foundation for the disciples.
7. Both published in Philadelphia by Fortress Press.
8. New York, Prentice-Hall, 1952.
9. See E. Miller & R. Bowman, Report, from the Christian Research Institute, February 1985, p.1: 'While Bible teaching is not emphasized enough, the role of experience in the Christian life appears to be somewhat over-emphasized. People in the Vineyard frequently seem to be willing to allow their spiritual experiences to be self-authenticating. They seem too willing to assume that whatever transpires in their midst is from God. That is not to say that the leaders do not attempt to show that their experiences are scriptural, but that experience far too often is their starting point.'
10. For a fuller exposition of mechanism in fundamentalist thinking, see J. Hopewell, Congregation, London, SCM, 1986.
11. P. Berger, The Heretical Imperative, London, Collins, 1980, pp.145ff. See also Robert Towler, The Need for Certainty, London, Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1984.

Section 1 (c)

1. Stewart Clegg, Frameworks of Power, 1989, p.37.
2. See Bertrand Russell, Power: A New Social Analysis, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1938, and Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, London, Macmillan, 1964.
3. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. M. Oakeshott, with an introduction by R.S. Peters, London, Macmillan, 1962.
4. See N. Machiavelli, The Prince, Everyman Edition, 1958.
5. R. Dahl, Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1961, F. Hunter, Community and Power, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1953, C.W. Mills, The Power Elite, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1956.
6. P. Bachrach and M.S. Baratz, 'Two Faces of Power', American Political Science Review, 56:947-52.
7. See P. Bachrach and M.S. Baratz, Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1970.
8. Steven Lukes, Power: A Radical View, London, Macmillan, 1970, and Power (eds), Oxford, Blackwell, 1986.

9. Stewart Clegg, Frameworks of Power, 1989, p. 13.
10. For example, see P. Daudi, Power in the Organisation, Oxford, Blackwell, 1986.
11. There is no question that these two interests are linked, although I know of no serious work that supports this view. Material from The Church Growth Insitutue at Fuller Seminary, California, the British Church Growth Association and the United and Foreign Bible Society all talk about the 'health' of the Church, 'health' being an umbrella concept that shelters principles of growth, management, evangelism and the implementation of spiritual gifts on the congregational structure, including healing.
12. Stewart Clegg, Frameworks of Power, 1989, p.130ff.
13. Vineyard Ministries International is not to be confused with the more local Vineyard Christian Fellowships.
14. Stewart Clegg, Frameworks of Power, 1989, p.197.
15. Ibid., p. 198.
16. Ibid., p. 202.
17. Ibid., pp. 198-202.
18. P.D. Anthony, The Ideology of Work, London, Tavistock, 1977.
19. A. Strauss, Negotiations: Varieties, Contexts, Processes and Social Order, London, Jossey Bass, 1978, p. 201.
20. B. Barnes, The Nature of Power, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1988, p.103.
21. The drift of this argument is not dissimilar to that of Stephen Sykes in Keeping the Faith: Essays to Mark the Centenary of 'Lux Mundi' (ed: G. Wainwright, London, SPCK, 1989, pp. 1-24). Sykes' article argues that 'faith' can only be understood relationally to other verbal nodal points, such as hope, the having of knowledge, etc.
22. Stewart Clegg, Frameworks of Power, 1989, p. 207.
23. R. Adams, Energy and Structure, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1975.
24. P.Daudi, Power in the Organisation, 1986, p. 266.
25. D. H. Wrong, Power: Its Forms, Bases and Uses, 1979, p.2, 6, 21, etc.

Section 1 (d)

1. Gerlach and Hines (People, Power and Change) point out that although access to individual power is a feature of fundamentalist movements and partly responsible for their strength, it is also to blame for their fragmentation: p.43.
2. There is a strong element of cognitive dissonance here. For example, Paul Cain, the major prophet of Wimber's "Kansas Six", prophesied that 'revival will break out in Britain in 1990'. The apparent failure of this prophesy to be actualised has resulted in some re-interpretation for Wimber and his prophets. See Equipping the Saints, Vol 5., no.1., Winter 1991, pp.10-12.

Section 2 (a)

1. c.f. Tom Smail, The Power of Love, [Audio-cassette], London, C.S.Lewis Centre, 1990, tape 1, side 1. See also P.

Hocken, Streams of Renewal, Exeter, Paternoster Press, 1987, and A.R. Mather, The Theology of the Charismatic Movement, Univ. of Wales PhD (unpublished), 1983.

Section 2 (b)

1. According to Anthony Giddens, Weber's theory of charisma is the most enduring sociological theory of all time.
2. Literally, 'ecclesiastical law'.
3. Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, New York, OUP, 1947, pp.328, 358-59.
4. Ibid., p.359.
5. Max Weber, On Charisma and Institution Building, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968, p.22.
6. Ibid., p.24.
7. Weber, Theory of Social and Economic Organization, p.363.
8. Weber, On Charisma, pp.55-58.
9. Arthur Schweitzer, 'Theory and Political Charisma', Comparative Studies in Society and History, March 1974, pp.150-86.
10. Ibid., p.153.
11. Ibid., p.154.
12. Ibid., p.158.
13. Ibid., p.178.
14. Guenther Roth, 'Socio-Historical Model and Developmental Theory: Charismatic Community, Charisma of Reason, and Counterculture', American Sociological Review, Vol 40, April 1975, p.151.
15. Ibid., p.151.
16. See Edward Shils, 'Charisma, Order, and Status', American Sociological Review, Vol 30, April 1965, p.200, and 'Concentration and Dispersion of Charisma: Their Bearing on Economic Policy in Underdeveloped Countries', World Politics, Vol 11, October 1958, p.3.
17. William H. Friedland, 'For a Sociological Concept of Charisma', Social Forces, Vol 43, October 1964, p.19.
18. Ibid., p.20-21.
19. Ibid., p.23.
20. Martin E. Spencer, 'What is Charisma?' The British Journal of Sociology, Vol 24, September 1973, p.343-44.
21. Ibid., p.345-47.
22. Ibid., p.351-52.
23. Bryan Wilson, The Noble Savages, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1975, p.93. Wilson's discussion is most helpful in underlining our contention that charisma is an agent of power. However, he is surely wrong when he states (p.123) that the concept of charismatic leadership has been made redundant by charismatic renewal. True, charisma is a widely diffuse agent in certain Restorationist and charismatic churches, but it still usually has a singular defining focus in the form of a person.

Section 2 (c)

1. Thomas E. Dow, 'The Theory of Charisma', The Sociological Quarterly, Vol 10, Summer 1969, p.190.

2. Leonard C. Hawes, Pragmatics and Analoguing: Theory and Model Construction in Communication, Reading, Massachusets, Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1975.
3. Hawes, Pragmatics and Analoguing, pp.45-47.
4. Max Weber, On Charisma and Institution Building, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1968, p.24.
5. P. Wagner, Church Growth: State of the Art, Illinois, Tyndale, 1989, p.125.
6. L. Karon, 'Presence in The New Rhetoric', Philosophy and Rhetoric, Vol 9, Spring 1976, p.97.
7. C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric, Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 1969,p.174.
8. Ibid., p.177.
9. Eric Hoffer, The True Believer, New York, Harper and Row, 1951, p.105.
10. Martin Spencer, 'What is Charisma?', The British Journal of Sociology, Vol 24, September 1973, p.348.
11. Schiffer, Charisma, p.37.
12. Wimber's language about Satan tends towards making him a virtually incarnate being. See especially Power Healing, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1986, p.111ff.
13. Wimber, Power Healing, p.164.
14. 'Satan murdered him', was a remark made by Wimber at his Brighton Conference in 1986. (Tape 7, 'On Prayer', 1986).
15. Wimber, Power Healing, p.159ff. See also 'I am a Wounded Soldier' (1985), by Danny Daniels, in Songs of the Vineyard: Volume I, Eastbourne, Kingsway, 1987.
16. Arthur Schweitzer, 'Theory and Political Charisma', Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol 16, March 1974, p.153.
17. See J. Wimber, Power Evangelism, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1985, p.44ff. There is an abundant supply of such stories circulating in this kind of fundamentalist universe. In particular, I refer the reader to the remarkable profile of Paul Cain in Equipping the Saints (A "Vineyard Publication"), Vol 3, No. 4., 1989.
18. Ann R. Willner, Charismatic Political Leadership: A Theory, Princeton, Center of International Studies, Princeton University, 1968, p.103-104.
19. Erwin Bettinghaus, Persuasive Communication, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980, p.113.
20. Mark Knapp, Non-Verbal Communication in Human Interaction, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978, p.158.
21. L. Rosenfeld and J. Civikly, With Words Unspoken: The Non-Verbal Experience, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976, p.71.
22. Sidney Jourard, 'An Exploratory Study of Body-Accessiblity', British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, Vol 5, 1966, p.221-231.
23. Not actually touching in healing meetings arose as a result of climatic conditions. It was simply too hot and sweaty to lay hands on people in California, in buildings that were not air-conditioned. Wimber's original meetings were often held in vacant warehouses; the Vineyard practice of almost touching therefore developed, and is now adopted all over the world at Wimber/Vineyard meetings, irrespective of climate.

Part Two: Power Religion

CHAPTER FOUR

POWER AND IDEOLOGY

1.a. Introduction: Worship as Ideology

Much has been written about the ideology of certain movements in order to explain their power and appeal. There is no doubt that familiarity with the theology or the ideological formulations of a specific movement is essential to an understanding of it, especially in the study of fundamentalism. The question therefore necessarily arises: How might we locate an ideology, particularly if it is hidden? Most studies of fundamentalism, (including our own at present) tend to suggest that the ideology of a given group can be located in the dogmatic creeds, principles and formulations that it advances to the world. At least one consequence of this 'reading' is a tendency to perceive fundamentalist ideology as either a reductive or deductive theological statagem. Whilst this might be partly correct, it cannot be wholly true. If fundamentalism is to be correctly understood as primarily inductive, then the ideology needs to be traced to the actual religious experience itself, not to the principles or dogmas derived from it. It is my contention that 'core' ideology can be located in the worship of fundamentalist groups: it is the worship of a community that provides it with its primary religious experience, and thus its certainty and ideology. So, we would agree with Eric Hoffer's remark that 'the effectiveness of a doctrine does not come from its meaning but from its certitude'.[1] Nowhere is that certitude more keenly expressed than in worship: The 'closed cognitive organisation of beliefs' is supremely held in the arena of worship, where God is both met and meets, is addressed and addresses.[2] It is here that core-ideology and its power can be principally located in fundamentalist groups: the God who is known and can direct when properly encountered. Our use of the word 'ideology' here needs some clarification before we proceed. In my form of analysis, 'ideology' has a dual function. At a basic level, it is the 'common denominator' for the group concerned; the 'foundations' of the social construction of reality. However, it is also an 'action-directing device':

Ideology is not neutral; it probes, persuades and pushes adherents into new patterns of action and belief.

The worship songs of John Wimber are a paradigmatic example of the power of ideology within fundamentalism Beyond asking how the rhetoric of worship is both powerful and persuasive, there lies a deeper question about what or who is being addressed. For Wimber, the answer is of course simple: God. But there is more to worship, even simple worship, than this. Lionel Adey in his Hymns and the Christian 'Myth', observes that most hymnographers focus on a single person of the Trinity, and in doing so, create 'mutations of God'. Such mutations result in convergence of the identity between the person of the Trinity and the worshippers, and a consequent belief that a mutual cleaving process takes place.[3] This may seem obvious to some, and indeed, perhaps unavoidable. Yet Wimber and his song-writing colleagues are perhaps peculiar in addressing all three persons of the Trinity, in fact, no one person appears to be substantially more preferred to another. But what does emerge from even the most casual analysis of Songs of the Vineyard, is that the individuality and corporate nature of Trinitarian personhood (which might include distinctiveness in identity, functionality, space and time, yet mutuality and relationship), is dissolved God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit assumes the same dissolved character throughout: intimate, loving precious, refreshing, fulfilling, mighty and omnipotent, all without qualification. The data that emerge from heuristic analysis here, suggest that it is not so much God who is being addressed, but rather favourable concepts of God - an ideology - that has rooted itself in the individual and corporate identity of the worshippers Granted, this is a thesis that needs some elucidating, and our analysis will attempt to disclose the directionality as well as the effect of Wimber's worship. Social and systematic theorists have often noted that worship fixes axioms and paradigms, and moves and persuades people in a way that few forms of communication can hope to match.[4]

However, we must remember that the cultural forms that form that world are also to be understood as (inductive) 'strategies' or problem-solving tools operating within certain rule-bounded contexts The term 'strategy' implies that conscious intention is operative in the author's (i e , of the

worship song/hymn) choice of language, yet authors and speakers are not always fully conscious of the techniques they are using and why they might be effective. Certainly, in the case of Wimber's worship materials, this may well be the case, although we must note that the selection of approved material for public use only usually includes their own material, even excluding material from similar traditions. Furthermore, in accord with Berger, we must note that some texts, especially those deriving from ritual performances (i.e., worship), provide a strategy for participation. The songs of Wimber's Vineyards are most obviously an example of this: they encourage participation by singing, as well as inviting the audience to become a congregation, sharing in the general description of the world encountered in the text. These texts do not offer an abstract philosophical system, yet they do operate at a distance from everyday activities and issues. As such they represent strategies for solving problems about the relations between human beings to each other and to the spiritual forces or beings of their universe. So, the power of ideology lies in a strategy that is sociologically transcendent: the songs raise the participants above the lesser subjects and objects of this world, so that they may actually touch God, and He them To understand how such power comes through ideology, the next section will focus on the power of emotivity, via an analysis of the passion, passivity and power, and the overall 'community of feeling' that is created by the worship.[5]

1.b. The Power of Emotivity, Passion, Passivity and Power in Vineyards Worship

In order to assess the emotive capacity of Vineyard worship in its core ideological role, it is necessary to begin by describing the actual structure of the worship Unlike many conventional hymn books, Songs of The Vineyard reflects no liturgical or seasonal scheme in its ordering. There is no plan of rotation as one might have encountered in the New England Puritan or Shaker communities, which often sung metrical Psalms. There is no topical arrangment of the sort once employed by John Wesley.[1] The songs are simply arranged by alphabetical order by the first line, with the occasional 'titled' song appearing in italics in the index if it is known by a name other than its first line. There are contextual reasons for structuring the book like this. Firstly, most participants at a Wimber Conference learn the songs by heart, they are sung over and over again consecutively - sometimes up to seven or eight times. Repetition is an important structural device, that can serve and underscore core ideology. One hour of pure singing may only contain five or six songs in total; the songs and the structure in which they operate are designed to be 'picked up easily', to be learnt.[2] Secondly, the song book is a reference book for musicians, and for those who are unfamiliar with the style of worship. Seasoned participants do not use the books - their hands and arms are usually occupied in worship (either raised, in dancing, or in a 'blessing' gesture).[3]

We are tackling an area where exact boundaries are hard to fix. Worship in Vineyard Churches and conferences covers a great range of activity, but some territory markers are needed to keep the discussion within manageable limits. Here I will only be considering songs that have originated from Vineyard sources, although much of what I say will, I'm sure, be capable of wider applications to other forms of fundamentalism, especially those groups that can be identified with charismatic renewal or 'Restorationism'. Most of the songs to be discussed have been written since 1980. The material is of a homogenous nature: most authors are male, and from urban backgrounds, with a familiarity with 'Rock and Roll' music

and culture. Furthermore, they are fundamentalists in the revival tradition, distinctively influenced by Wimber. He has written about one-fifth of the songs himself, and all the other authors are members of one of his churches.

Our heuristic analysis will proceed here by noting the inter-relating themes, structures and metaphors within each song. For example, it is clear that the worship songs are typically constructed around a series of metaphors in poetic form: God as 'Potter', His people to be 'moulded', the individual as the 'child' of God. The overall theme is 'dwelling' on the God who has power over his (malleable) materials - people. Careful sifting of the texts reveals that only a few of the songs frame metaphors in contrasting relationships with others (light/dark, captive/freedom). Yet most of the songs do not escape being sharply dualistic: the world and its woes is not to be compared to the bliss of heaven, God's love and the beauty of Jesus:

> Lord, we ask that you would come right now.
> Jesus, come and heal us now.
> Spirit come and fill us now.
> We love you, we love you,
> We love you, yes we do.[4]

Although the structure of the song is typically monotonous (verse 2 just substitutes 'I' and 'me' for 'we' and 'us'), the before-and-after pattern established by the song should be noted. Presence, filling and healing are requested, and the anticipatory response to fulfillment ('we love you') articulated. As will be shown later, the dualistic metaphors are typical of Wimber: presence (of the Lord) versus absence, healing versus sickness, and filling versus emptiness. As is often the case with Wimber, the directionality of the song is couched in terms of 'love for God', thus preventing the requests articulated in the song appearing to be purely self-indulgent.

An inquiry into the theme of a song is to simply ask the question, 'What is this song about?' The answers might be Christ's sacrifice, the beauty of Jesus, or the Christian life, or any number of other topics.

Although Wimber does use some Christian 'battle songs' in his Collection, most of them concentrate on a loose cluster of themes that interconnect. Such themes can be divided into four basic categories· (1) songs of the love, closeness, beauty and might of God, (2) songs focussing on the power and dominion of God, (3) holiness, and (4) songs of and about praise and worship.[5] I will not explicitly attempt to prosecute my analysis by using these thematic categories. However, as our investigation develops, their general applicability should be notable.

Another dimension to consider in analysis is that of form. Not only what is said in the songs, but the way they express it, reveals something about the way in which relationships between human beings and deities are conceived One especially important aspect of form is the mode of address. In Songs of the Vineyard (Vol. 1), just under half the songs are distinctly personal, with the word 'I' appearing in the first line; the 'I/You' relationship is the dominating form or mode of address in Wimber's worship. Other songs tend to be credal, calls to corporate worship, or songs of love. Given these factors, the ideological strategy and directionality of Wimber's worship songs will now be more closely scrutinised

If it were possible to simulate a debate between Wimber and Wesley (or some of the other more established hymn writers of the past), differences would quickly emerge. Initially, we must state that Wesley' hymns are didactic - to help unread people learn theology whereas Wimber's are existential to help people experience God in new ways. For Wesley, and others of his type, there is a stress on the sin of mankind, and the need for salvation, on Christ's attonement, and the power of the cross; on the need for holiness, discipline and order. Although as we have noted earlier, Wimber claims to be an 'heir-in-vogue' of Wesley, Whitfield, Edwards and others, the stress is quite different. Songs focus on the power and love of God, the Christian is not so much sinful, as unfulfilled, and in need of healing, the cross of Christ is almost absent, replaced by an emphasis on the majesty and closeness of God:

I receive You, O Spirit of love,
how I need Your healing from above,
I receive You, I receive You,
I receive Your healing from above,
I receive your healing from above.

I can feel You, touching me right now,
Come reveal Your power on me now,
I can feel You, I can feel You,
I can feel Your power on me now,
I can feel Your power on me now.[6]

The text is suggestive in its approach to God.[7] In its use of the personal pronoun, the song is an invitation to commune with God, who can provide the power and healing that (it is suggested) is lacking. The onus on the singer is simply to be receptive to the power available. Thus, the worship presents a kind of 'power asymmetry': the worshipper is 'cast' as being outside the 'power circuit', yet is being implicitly invited to connect up within it.

The song cited above is typical of the passivity present in Vineyard worship songs. The unresisting and submissive character desired of the worshipper is a common denominator in almost all of the songs in Songs of the Vineyard Yet it is a passivity that does not include sufferance, abstinence or pain; the worship songs operate at a level where, if

I surrender all my love and I rejoice,
You suddenly appear and wipe away the tears
And fill me with Your love and tender mercy,
And fill me with Your love and tender mercy.

Tears, fears, pain and misery are resolved in the songs, provided the worshipper has surrendered to the love and power of God. Significantly, the source of such malaises (personal responsibility, Satan, or whatever), are seldom mentioned. This is a vital strategy in the advancement of ideology. Reflecting Wimber's interest in the church simply needing to receive power, the worshipper is portrayed as a passive victim of emotional, physical or spiritual affliction. The solution to the problem

is equally passive: to receive and reside in a counterbalancing flow of power and love.

Although there is a sense in which God is the focus of the songs ('Lord' is the most commonly used title to address God in Vineyard worship, after 'You'[9]), any distance between God and humanity has been eroded. The secret of knowing Him lies in the inductive strategy, an inward movement, not only towards power and healing, but ultimately to a realm of intimacy where God is experienced. The following two songs exemplify this:

> Hold me Lord, in Your arms,
> fill me Lord, with Your Spirit,
> Touch my heart, with Your love,
> Let my life glorify Your name.[10]

> As Your Spirit moves upon me now
> You meet my deepest need,
> And I lift my hands up to Your throne,
> Your mercy, I've received.[11]

It is a realm not only of passivity but of passion; the emotions and feelings that are surrendered to God, result in an inward order (control) that can counter the external forces (chaos) of sickness, evil, dissipation and impotence. This is the emotive power of the ideology: suggesting in metaphor, theme and form that surrender of self (especially the emotions and passions), and focussing them on the Lord, will result in the self being accepted by God, and turned into a positive force that can combat harmful exteriorities.

The core-ideology of Wimber is thus manifest in the two dominant strategic foci of Vineyard worship songs. In metaphor, theme and form, a clear stress on submission to power emerges, in the wider pursuit of fulfillment and power for the individual Christian, the Church, and ultimately, the human race. Why are Vineyard worship songs like this? The rhetoric of passion and passivity employed in the worship songs of Wimber is not nearly so present in the teaching of Wimber.[12] Could it be that the songs simply serve the purpose of getting audiences into a happy, secure yet submissive frame of mind, before teaching takes place? Perhaps, but I suspect the answer is more complex than this, and has something to do with

the place of passion in the rhetoric of 'Revivalism'. As has already been observed in earlier chapters, Wimber's principles depend heavily on the tradition of Revivalism, providing an ideal vehicle for his contemporary teachings. Given this, it is important to look more deeply at the place of passion in this kind of ideology.

Analysis of ideology always needs to take account of the social situation in which language functions, and a history of such social situations may provide clues as to the origins of such rhetoric. Space does not permit the charting of the history of revivals here, but most scholars of revivals appear to hold to the view that the place of feelings and affections in social or public religion was prevalent in America by the early nineteenth century.[13] The roots of the ideology may lie in many places: Puritan stress on 'conversionist language' or Methodist emphasis on 'personal testimony' may all have contributed to the new phenomenon that Sandra Sizer describes as a 'community of intense feeling' in the context of revivals.[14] Individuals underwent similar experiences that tended to centre on conversion, and thereafter united with others in matters of moral and social orientation. The language adopted and employed in such contexts created and sustained both the community and the feelings of it. The intense intimacy of such language, articulated in social contexts, emerges in the rhetoric of Finney's revivals in New York, where the issue of controlling or channelling intense emotion was a central concern for Finney.[15]

With respect to Wimber, similar concerns are at stake over the place of emotions in his worship meetings. It is people's feelings that are to be changed first (by worship), before their minds are changed (by teaching). This may function in a variety of ways, but the following example will serve as a model. Wimber declares that the essence of the 'prayer of faith' is that it achieves its object, yet is originally within the divine will. Thus, a prayer for healing, for example, must come from the right motives, be in accordance with God's promises and providence and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, presented by a person who has renounced all sin or other 'blockages' to God. Yet the prayer may fail, God being free to act or not as He wills. Wimber's response to this that is the

prayer of faith may have the effect of changing the petitioners' feelings, so that they do begin to desire and feel what God feels.[16] The logic of this, even in a moderately predestinarian framework, is somewhat tortuous, but logic is not the point. Wimber is dealing with changing feelings, or the 'state of mind', rather than cause-effect relationships. His descriptions of the practice of prayer emphasise the intensity of experience, the 'boldness' of the petitioner, the strength or power of the 'encounter'. The mind and emotions are to be fixed on the object of prayer until an answer (or relief) is found.[16] All this is framed within the context of a God whose heart can be touched by our own yearnings:

> Your prayers are very precious,
> They reach the heart of Jesus,
> Like a sweet, sweet perfume.'[17]

The stress on feeling leads to a stress on unity of feeling ('agreement'). If worship is to 'flow' (in the spirit), and prayer is to be rewarded, it is vital that the affections and minds of the audience are as united as possible. Under these ideological conditions, further fundamentalist principles may then emerge. Emotivity can therefore be described as a primary nodal point in the inductive power circuit we are examining. Its ideological status is beyond doubt: it fixes the initial 'power asymmetry' for the believer, and then inductively induces them to adopt the preliminary power principles outlined in Wimber's worship.

1.c. The Empowered Community

The forms of the Vineyards songs reveal the fundamental importance of articulating emotion and passion in Wimber's meetings. Prayer, testimony and exhortation, all proceeding from the ideology expressed in worship, combine to create a community of feeling. The words and music in the worship setting operate as basic 'lines of influence', as models for the experience of others. The worship songs articulate emotions which can be shared, creating an ethos of unity and sacredness in which God is intimately experienced.

> You are the Vine, we are the branches,
> keep us abiding in You.
> You are the Vine, we are the branches,
> keep us abiding in You.
> Then we'll go in Your love,
> then we'll go in Your name,
> that the world will surely know
> that You have power to heal and to save.[1]

A heuristic analysis of Vineyard songs also shows that the community of feeling could be anywhere, at any time, and could extend over any distance. The songs do not borrow from domestic, war/battle or substantial Biblical imagery, and appear to offer little in the way of structure or hierarchy Yet this is an ideological strategy in itself. Externally, the community appears structureless, united only in spirit. Internally, however, the community of feeling is the community of the fulfilled. And this fulfillment arises out of the community's self-reflection of their closeness to God, and His closeness to them. There is thus a conflation between the agency of Vineyard worship and God's own self-involvement with the world It is because the community is so close to God that issues like sin, the cross and conversion are seldom dealt with in song; such things are deemed to be peripheral. They are for those who are approaching God, not those who are already with him, the immediacy of God is gently pressed in worship, virtually to its limit [2] In all this, the worship songs of Wimber seem to reduce significant knowledge of God to testimony about

transformed emotional states, and stress how the individual believer has been affected

Most importantly for our purposes, the creation of a community of feeling which perceives itself as purely religious and beyond the mundane, can disguise the use to which ideology is put. The metaphors, themes and forms employed in Vineyard worship offer a construction of reality to the worshippers that transcends normal life, and has little in the way of structural or political identity. Yet the Vineyards of Wimber can be deeply implicated in such matters. Their employment of suggestive metaphors is profoundly narrow and exclusive, leading to individual worshippers becomming a community of people who have learnt to put affection in its place, and who have transferred their (redeemed) passions to God, and thereby purified their lives.

> Lord, I love You,
> You alone did hear my cry,
> only You can mend this broken heart of mine,
> Yes, I love You, and there is no doubt,
> Lord, You've Touch'd me from the inside out.[3]

The metaphors present in Vineyard worship are crucial to the operating ideological strategy that creates and magnifies the community of feeling. Vineyard worship songs are unlike traditional nineteenth century Gospel Hymns, which paired positive and negative metaphors in their own way.[4] The subtlety of the ideology present in Wimber's worship songs lies in their failure to specifically articulate anything negative, which might be dialectically related to the positive. Now, this needs some clarification Certainly, singing about the healing, power, love and touch of God implies in some way that these things are to come, and thus the present is less than perfect. Interestingly however, even the present tense (and sometimes the past) is often ambiguously portrayed in the core-ideology:

> As Your Spirit moves upon me now,
> You meet my deepest need,
> And I lift my hands up to Your throne,
> Your mercy I've received.[5]

Yet exactly what one might be delivered from is mostly left unsuggested. The present situation is described (the Spirit is moving on the subject), a response to this articulated (raised hands), and a reward for accepting these metaphors declared (mercy has been received). Thus, the ideological function of the metaphors in the worship songs is to draw the audience into love and submission; their individual pasts are negated by not being specifically articulated or precisely expressed in worship.

The community is thus empowered via a matrix of metaphors, themes and forms in worship that create an ideological 'community of feeling' that is ultra-receptive to God's power, concerns and intentions. The ideology establishes and fixes a relationship between God and the believers that is intimate, at times passive and passionate, and occasionally, almost sexual. The ideology in the worship functions in the community at many levels. Primarily, it acts as a primer; preparing hearts to receive teaching. Yet it also acts as a harmoniser, stressing unity and solidarity of experience and purpose. As ideology, its empowering capacity lies both in what it suggests and fails to suggest. Its empowering possibilities also lie in the songs being inductively simple, and then endlessly repeated in practice, accompanied by flowing melodies that reduce the horizon of mental and aesthetic reflection.[6] In this sense, we might agree with Wayne Booth and his assertion that this (Vineyard worship) is a modern ideology, with a complementary language of assent: 'it shows the characteristics of many religious systems - most important for our purposes, the capacity for self-validation by internal reference from one dogma to another.'[7] Herein lies the certitude of the inductive strategy.

1.d. Evaluation

This intermediate evaluation notes that the worship songs of John Wimber and his Vineyards are undoubtedly a fundamental vehicle for their ideology. In fact, this is true of the whole charismatic 'worship situation' that believers find themselves participating in when subscribing to Wimber's distinctive form of fundamentalist-revivalism. Yet in spite of much criticism of Wimber's style - 'individualistic', 'full of mindless repetition', 'introspective', 'manipulative' - serious theological engagement with this method of conveying fundamentalist ideology is virtually unknown.[1] We have already noted in this thesis that theologians have often failed to deal with fundamentalism in a satisfactory manner, and ignorance of its worshipping tradition is primary evidence of this.

Given that fact, a study of (Wimber's) fundamentalist - revivalist worship is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, the immense and increasing popularity of this form of worship needs noting and explaining, even though other Christians may find its style and ambience abhorrent.[2] Secondly, sung music plays a significant role in communicating the ideology of a movement and in shaping theological awareness, a dynamic that is not often inculcated into mainstream church consciousness.[3] Composers in the renewal or 'Restorationalist' movement are acutely aware that a good song is often more memorable than a good sermon, and this in itself is significant. The songs as ideology are intended to be remembered 'in the head and in the heart', so that the believers' closeness to God and the community of faith has a constancy about it, arising out of an inward communion with one's own recall of the dynamic worship in which God is encountered.[4] Thus, if we ask (following Habermas) 'who benefits from this ideology?', the answer would primarily lie in the area of leadership and control. A homogenous worship culture issues stability and unity, and also enables the leadership consistently to offer favourable concepts of God to the Congregation. (The fact that the office of "worship leader" is so highly prized in charismatic and revivalist groups is no accident). Thirdly, worship songs are powerful indicators of the concerns and

character of a community. As A.P. Merriman comments in The Anthropology of Music,

> Music is a human phenomenon produced by people and existing and functioning in a social situation ... Songs provide the student of human behaviour with some of the richest material he has for analysis, but their full potential remains to be exploited.[5]

Bearing in mind our outline of the ideology contained within Wimber's worship songs, our next task is to probe how that ideology is constructed, and to particularly press what is implied about the nature, quality and character of God, and the relationship of believers to the person of God. What will emerge from this analysis is an understanding of the kind of power that funds the ideology. The inductive-fundamentalist strategy of Wimber leads the believer to what Clegg calls a 'hegemonic (power) ideology', in which consent and subservience mutually inter-relate.[6] This ideology in turn, is 'fixed' by concepts of sovereign power that lead to the community of faith becomming a micro-ecology of power.

2.a. Introduction: Some Structures in Hegemonic Ideology

If it can be said that the operating social construction of reality in Wimber's theology and churches arises, at least in part, from a form of emotivity, then our next task must be to examine the structure behind that emotivity. It is being suggested that Wimber subscribes - especially in his worship materials - to a hegemonic ideology that 'fixes' the basic capacity of that emotivity. This fixing is basically executed through the careful selection (possibly unconscious?) of two dominant metaphors in the songs themselves, to which we shall turn in a moment. However, there are three more basic considerations to ponder first, which relate to the structuredness of ideology in all fundamentalist groups.

Firstly, attention needs to be paid to the distinction between using a word and using a name. With a word, the speaker places the referent in their world to the extent that the referent is amenable to their cognitive structuring capacity. With a name however, an independent 'reality' is addressed, which can interact with and affect the speaker. What is named can vary from being a person to a disease, to a food or God. When God is addressed by a name, two things take place: (i) the worshipper is brought into a responsive or corresponding relationship to God, and (ii) God, once appropriately named, is deemed to preside over the concerns of the believer. As we shall see with Wimber, the titles ascribed to God in worship are primarily 'You' and 'Lord', the first connoting love and immediacy, the second power and authority. In these titles, hegemonic ideology is fixed.

Secondly, attention to the actual structure of worship can reveal something about its strategy. Worship, as an emotivating force, has both a God-ward and communal goal. For example, Wimber's song 'Here We Are' suggests to the singers assembled that,

> Here we are, gathered together as a family,
> bound as one, lifting up our voices to the King of Kings.
> We cry 'Abba, Father, worthy is your name.
> Abba, Father, worthy is your name'.[1]

The song creates a relationship of obligation between the believers, and alludes to the relationship between God and the worshippers. The metaphors 'family', 'bound' and 'lifting' ideologically define the identity, purpose and activity of the singers, knitting them into a homogenous unit, in which further hegemonic ideology can be fixed.

Thirdly, attention needs to be paid to the actual structure of the music and words, and especially the way in which <u>emphasis</u> is achieved. For example, repetition of a sequence of words and notes in Wimber's worship is a common device

> More love, more power, more of You in my life.
> More love, more power, more of You in my life.[2]

The music lingers over the words 'love' and 'power', teasing them out, with the line then repeated, turning this part of the song into a kind of liturgical mantra. In the example above, the musical and textual structure provide a framework in which the hegemonic ideology can operate with effect. We shall examine how this is done, via two pivotal metaphors.

2.b. Two Ascriptive Metaphors of Power

The notion that metaphors communicate a core ideology of God is not a new one. For example, Sallie McFague's Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language (London, SCM, 1983) outlines a shift in theology, in which dogmatic propositions about metaphysical realities have given way to exploring the way in which narratives and metaphors function in religion, as vehicles of meaning. McFague shows how religious language with all its images and metaphors, actually becomes theological language, offering ideological concepts of God, life and the cosmos. Her approach to narrative, like mine to that of fundamentalism, is not reductivist, but rather interpretative, and attempts to illuminate how language motivates and shapes the lives of believers; in short, how the social and theological construction of reality comes to be. It is our view that the metaphors of 'You' and 'Lord' are both models of God, as well as ideological tools in Vineyard worship, that mediate an immediate framework of power to the worshipper.

The immediacy is achieved, at least in part, by an uncritical but relentless emphasis in the worship on the power of love. Significantly for our study, Niklas Luhmann, in his provocative book Trust and Power', identifies love as a 'generalised symbolic medium of communication'.[2] By this Luhmann means that metaphors - such as 'You' and 'Lord' in the case we are discussing - are general symbols in communication that are designed to solve problems, by offering a semantic matrix that is intimately connected with reality. As such, these metaphors may be used to refer to specific problems when employed by worshippers, since they are communicative instructions which can be manipulated according to circumstances. In other words, the names for God are often ascriptive rather than descriptive. Of course, the metaphors of 'You' and 'Lord' themselves are codes for a range of concepts: love, power, authority and immediacy, to name but a few. Although there is sometimes overlap between the semantics of the two metaphors in Vineyard worship, these distinctive metaphors are quite properly to be singled out for special treatment. They are the most frequently occurring metaphors, and their ideological function is traceable

in most of Wimber's work The 'You' of Wimber is the source of 'signs'; the signs are signs of love; 'You' is the subject of intimate, direct speech, as was noted in the previous Section. 'Lord' is the source of 'wonders'; the wonders are displays of power (miracles, prophecy); the approach to the 'Lord' is usually made by more indirect speech, affording the believer less risk of failure.

Understood like this, 'You' is a simple metaphor for the love of God, 'Lord' for the power of God. But our analysis cannot just stop here. Love itself, when spoken of directly in Vineyard worship songs, is not simply a description of a feeling or a state of affairs. It is a code of communication itself, a form of ideology, according to the rules of which, feelings can be formed and simulated, denied or imputed, used or abused. The songs offer a pattern of behaviour to the worshipper; the meaning of love or the immediacy of God as 'You' is enhanced by small signs, from any source, that validate the code. Thus, even if a high stress on love and 'You' appears to imply that Vineyard worship is somehow 'total communication'[3] ('songs not just about God, but to Him'), it is not actually quite the case:

> Lord, I ask that you would come right now.
> Jesus, come and heal me now.
> Spirit come and fill me now,
> I love You, I love You,
> I love You, yes I do.[4]

Following theorists of metaphors such as Lakoff, we can say that the metaphor of 'You' is a rhetorical device that enriches every ingredient of Vineyard worship, by implying that the content of all Vineyard communication to God is centred on love for God. In fact, 'You' is a code that signifies that God is close to the needs of the worshipper, and that their desires are consistent with their love for God. 'You' is ultimately a code for empowerment, via personal intimacy with God.

Given this connection between 'love' and 'You', how do these metaphors function as ideology in the context of worship? Three considerations arise. Firstly, God as 'You' connoting love, can receive information from

the worshipper, since love is receptive. As such, God described as 'You' assists a process whereby ordinary occurrences can be transferred by the worshipper onto another horizon of possibilities. Often, these are signified by Wimber in only the most general terms: healing, filling or touching The horizon of possibility offered in Vineyard worship is one of love, but a love that can transform situations by personal adoration of 'You'. Secondly therefore, and somewhat paradoxically, metaphors of 'love' and 'You' enhance communication by not truly communicating. The metaphors hold their value for the worshipper in their vagueness, by perhaps suggesting God is already anticipating the worshipper, or that they already are understood, without having to actually articulate their desires.[5] Thirdly, the communicative medium of love offers stability of understanding The metaphor 'You' fixes an ideological image of God in the mind of the worshipper God is personal, known, intimate and present, forever ready to show his love by meeting the needs of those who communicate with Him by 'love'. 'You' portrays a God of love and passion, whose desires are centred on demonstrating His love for people with 'signs' that betoken this aspect of His nature. As a dominating, focussed metaphor, 'You' is effective because it binds the community of feeling together, harmonises its desires, and permits little in the way of contradiction or paradox. Since all is subjugated to giving and receiving within this framework, the scope of communication and behaviour is actually quite limited

Working alongside the metaphor 'You' is the metaphor 'Lord'. Naturally, they interconnect functionally at many levels, yet they offer distinctive portrayals of God in the ideological process, and contribute to the presiding model of God at work in Wimber's theology. The metaphor 'Lord' connotes power and omnipotence, and is an obvious semantic 'problem-solving' device. Naming God as 'Lord' in Vineyard songs seems to function ideologically in three ways. Firstly, there is a considerable overstatement present where God is invoked at Lord.[6] There is nothing that God cannot do, His unlimited power is a cause for praise:

> You are the Mighty King, the living Word,
> Master of everything, You are the Lord.[7]

This type of praise ties in with much of the testimony and teaching that follows worship. God's super-abundance and complete power cannot be limited. Therefore God can do small or great things for His people, that display His love (signs) and power (wonders). Secondly, 'Lord' is a code for obedience and submission, but of a particularly interesting type. If the desires of the worshipper are to be met, then submission must be offered to God. 'Lord' then, as a metaphor, operates as an exchange mechanism; for submitting to God's power and Lordship, worshippers are rewarded with having their problems solved by power:

> I give You all the honour and praise that's due Your name,
> for You are the King of Glory, the Creator of all things .
> As Your Spirit moves upon me now,
> You meet my deepest need [9]

A third ideological aspect in using the name 'Lord' is to encourage trust. That is to say, trust of one another in the community who know one Lord, who is the same for them all. And also trust of the Lord Himself, whose power alone can save and heal. 'Lift Jesus higher'[9] proclaims that there is 'power in His name' the more Jesus is trusted (lifted), the more likely it is that the power and healing in His name can be experienced by the worshipper. Fourthly, the metaphor 'Lord' also serves to reduce complexity. Just as 'You', signifying love, negated the necessity to be specific about problems, 'Lord' operates as a device that removes God from ordinary life. The metaphor 'Lord' places Jesus high above the problems and difficulties of the believer, yet draws the individual into worship, by suggesting that submission to Christ's Lordship and engagement in worshipful communion will help negate the problems even before they are specifically identified

> Lord, I'll seek after You,
> 'cause You're the only that satisfies,
> turn t'ward to kiss Your face,
> And as I draw near to You,
> I will give You all my love,
> I will give you my self,
> I will give you my life.'[10]

By focussing on the metaphors of 'You' and 'Lord' in worship, Wimber has created a social and theological hegemonic-ideology that guides the communication of selected essentials, via a fixation on concepts of love and power. The ideology consists of symbols and metaphors that connect their selection with emotiviation, and offer a framework in which individuals can find identity and power, and see it magnified in their own language about God.

In citing the songs above, I have attempted to show how the worship songs of Wimber are 'an [ideological] strategy for encompassing a situation' [1] That strategy, as can now be seen, does not just encompass situations it actually creates them. There is a real sense in which the worship songs of the Vineyard are themselves a construction of reality, that offer forms of love and power to the worshipper that are transcendent. Through passion, passivity and power, the emotivated fundamentalist community stands over and against the world, by articulating ideological states of being, in which full love and full power become realised. Worship is not a matter of the mind for Wimber; it is a 'matter of the heart', in which the worshipper's reality is transformed by praise. Songs like 'Praise the Lord with all your heart'[2] are a primary source of ideological instruction to the worshipper, that suggests that reality will be changed by love and power in the activity of praise

This Chapter was begun by noting Adey's observation that focussed worship may produce 'mutations of God'[3] in attempting to represent God in praise and supplication. Granted, this may be true of all worship to some extent. However, questions remain over the picture of God that emerges in Vineyard worship A few remarks seem pertinent here, that will be relevant to later discussion. Firstly, the twin emphasis by Wimber on an all-powerful and all-loving God bear some resemblance to the teaching of Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Christian Science Movement (See Chapter Seven). God's sovereignty (inherent in her Calvinist upbringing), and God as pure love (a New Testament doctrine she felt Calvin had neglected) are combined strategically to encompass basic problems in theodicy. Like Wimber, there is an inward and outward response called for on the part of the believer,

to defeat the problems caused by evil. The inward spiritual journey must ultimately connect with an experience of God's power, which must then (necessarily) be expressed via outward demonstrable signs. The worship of both Wimber's churches and Christian Science Churches is an important prerequisite in this process.'[14] Secondly, although the immediacy of God is celebrated in Vineyard worship, it is a nearness that does not permit worshippers to be fully human; in this sense, the portrayal of God, although loving and powerful, is nevertheless coercive and exclusive, since the operating power is force (which, following Wrong, cannot be denied). Thus, the worshippers are ultimately instructed to become not what they are, and be ontologically transformed into a 'power-replica' of Christ or the Spirit.'[15] Thirdly, and arising out of the previous two points, the absence of various aspects of Christian doctrine appropriated in the worship should be noted. the incarnation, life and death of Christ, the Church, the Christian life as 'journey', are just a few examples. Fourthly, the worship itself, as a core-ideology, along with the music, might be said to function emotively. In the words of Raymond Warren, it is there to 'relax and reassure the congregation, which may have the effect of helping them to accept the meaning of the song, or perhaps lull them into not thinking about it all'.'[16]

So, who benefits from the ideology that we have discussed? The hegemonic ideology present in Wimber's worship ultimately fixes a confederation of concepts based around love and power. These function both sociologically and theologically. God is both immediate ('You'), yet also the holder and purveyor of absolute authority over all things ('Lord'). The community itself is also constructed around this model. Wimber's "Kinship Groups" - a key core element in his Vineyard network - establish congregational immediacy. personal closeness and accountability characterises the inter-relationships within Vineyards. It also permits the leaders to be closely involved with the ordinary affairs of their congregation. If God is immediate, then his leaders are at the forefront of that immediacy. Like the 'Shepherding Movement' of British Restorationism, Wimber and his leaders can involve themselves in every small detail of the life of a believer, through prophecy, words of knowledge, exhortation and encouragement. Equally, an emphasis on God's

Lordship has sociological consequences. Leaders have authority· they represent the interests, view and power of the Lord, which is held by leader and led mutually within the wider power network. They are the ultimate beneficiaries from the ideology: their power to control is inevitably increased. The hegemonic ideology established here accounts for, at least in part, the inability of Wimber (and other fundamentalists) to dialogue seriously with opponents and critics. A dialogue can never really be tolerated, since any agreed 'results' by the two groups would either weaken the power of the leader or signal to the group that the power of God can somehow be shared in a plural coalition. This in itself would deny fundamentalists the exclusivity and certainty they seek, via a controlling core-ideology, which is central to the inductive power strategy.

2.c. Evaluation

In examining Wimber's worship, we need to avoid the common trap of treating his songs as simply texts. The music, as we have suggested previously, is not incidental, but integral. To ignore the theological impact of music is surely a mistake. The melodic, harmonic and rhythmic dimensions of music are all value-laden. Music imprints its own ideological meaning, no matter how hard this is to articulate.[1] Moreover, in a song, the words and music bear upon each other: they interact in subtle and profound ways. In the case of Wimber, the combination of 'soft contemporary rock' and 'romantic/intimate' tunes clearly help 'carry' the textual ideology of the songs.[2] However, our primary task in this evaluation is to show that these songs are agents of hegemonic ideological power. We suggest several implications.

Firstly, in many of Wimber's songs there is the conviction that God himself is the primary agent in worship, and that a profoundly personal relationship with God is possible for the worshipping believer. This is the inductive strategy in its basic form. encountering God through 'energising [worship] from within, and no less responding in it, alluring one again, inviting one into a continuing adventure'.[3] Some of Wimber's songs have a tendency to suggest that worship must somehow be 'engineered' before God can be encountered, but behind this lies a deeper commitment. To be caught up in God' own dynamic life and pulled into a deeper knowledge of his love and experience of his power, both privately and corporately.

Secondly, we note that the concept of divine power operating in many of these songs is distorted. I suspect this proceeds from a kind of quasi-Monarchian doctrine: Christ the King, enthroned in glory with the reigning Father is emphasised, at the expense of Christ in his risen humanity, who has known weakness. As T.F. Torrance and others have commented, there is a chronic tendency to thrust Christ into the majesty of God and neglect his continuing ministry in our humanity. The self-giving love of Christ on the cross - surely the very acme of God's power - does not feature significantly in Wimber's canon of worship songs. The power that is

therefore portrayed is usually that of supernatural brute force, rather than the ambiguous power of Calvary. At least one consequence of this is occasional condoning of naked self-assertion and the pursuit of power in the interests of the Church militant. the establishment of a mighty kingdom prior to the return of Christ [4]

This focussed attention on divine and human power means that, thirdly, other aspects of the Christian life receive scant attention. Human weakness is an obvious example. Those songs of Wimber that deal with 'Spiritual warfare' are strongly success-orientated, showing little awareness of our inherent frailty and limitations, and still less that such weakness can itself be an agent for the grace of God. Some songs actually adopt polemic against weakness.[5] And what of sin? The concept is almost entirely absent in Wimber's songs, and when it does surface, it is usually only as a defeated power rather than a serious or persistent problem. The cost of discipleship is another major theme to be neglected. Although Wimber's 'I am the Wounded Soldier' implies difficulties in the Christian life,[6] concepts such as frustration, perseverance, endurance and patience in the midst of opposition are hardly mentioned. There seems little recognition of the possibliity, as von Balthasar has suggested, that the Spirit may lead us into a sharing of Christ's suffering and at the same time be that in which God spans the gulf between desolation and triumph. Too many of Wimber's songs inductively lead the believer into only encountering God through either intimate or 'victorious' words, rhythms and melodies.

Fourthly, if human weakness is down-played in this way, something similar may also be said of God's divine power 'made perfect' in weakness (2 Cor. 12·9). Although Wimber addresses the cross in both his teachings and his songs, few songs focus on the death and sufferings of Christ. Where this is done, it is usually bracketed together with the resurrection and ascension, and used to communicate God's supremacy over sin, death and sickness. The notion of the cross as a place where God bears the full reality of evil is absent. And there is hardly a hint that the cross might give one a glimpse into God's participation in human suffering. The relationship betweeen the Spirit and the crucified Christ is also distorted

in Wimber's songs. The Spirit is either like a lover bearing gifts or a brute supernatural force: but both are unrelated to Christ as a role-model of power. Yet life in the Spirit within the body of Christ does relate: Christians share both the glory of Easter and the death of Christ. The Spirit was given to the disciples, after all, with nail-marked hands (John 20:22).

Fifthly, we must note the treatment of the Church and world in Wimber's songs. In common with other Restorationists, Wimber's songs portray the Church as a powerful body - like a 'mighty army', for example - which tends to stress the gathered congregation as an agent of God's power. Those songs of Wimber that do deal with the Church are particularly prone to conflating divine and human power in a distinctive manner: what we again find missing is a sense that authentic koinonia involves pain and hardship. Where pain or division is referred to, it is firmly in the context of 'Spiritual warfare', where the Church is treated as an object of Satan's focus, in order to limit the power of God. Equally, there is nothing in Vineyard worship to suggest that God's power is at work beyond the gathered worshipping congregation, an indication of the monopoly fundamentalist worshippers think that they have on God's power.

Lastly, we note that although Wimber's songs tend to exalt the universal power of God, actual concern for social justice and for the needs of others outside the gathered congregation is rare. (This could be said of many more established hymn compilations). Songs expressing suffering in solidarity with victims of human hurt appear to be completely absent. This is of particular significance as we move forward into the next Chapter. Wimber, in justifying his programme of fundamentalist charismatic renewal, claims to be an heir of Pentecostalism Yet the roots of Pentecostalism lie firmly in the appalling suffering of the American black slave trade. Those songs of faith arose in the midst of unspeakable hardship and powerlessness, quite unlike those of Wimber.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

Section 1 (a)

1. Eric Hoffer, The True Believer, New York, Harper and Row, 1965, p.28.
2. L.P. Gerlach and V.H. Hines, People, Power, Change: Movements of Social Transformation, New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1970, p.160. Gerlach and Hines assert that beliefs are at their most 'closed' -i.e., optimum ideological height- during worship. This is because worship is usually an area in which doubt and debate are negated, where the needs of believers and those outside the community of worship can be addressed through the picture of God offered in the praise and supplication.
3. Lionel Adey, Hymns and the Christian Myth, Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1986, p.153
4. Particularly in the work of Claude Levi-Strauss, where one can uncover useful hints and methods that assist the heuristic process. Working on models adapted from the field of linguistics, and inspired by Durkheim's work on taxonomy, Levi-Strauss attempted to discern the ideological structures in texts, the unconscious rules of grammar as it were, that might form a lens through which people see, and according to which they process their cosmos-experience. Levi-Strauss is in accord with Berger here, insofar as he holds that 'the social construction of reality' involves a process of selection and integration by means of which a group constitutes its world. The work of Jurgen Habermas goes one stage further than this, and asks, 'who benefits from these ideologies?'.See especially J. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, Boston, Beacon Press, 1971, for a fuller account. Equally, a different perspective on ideology in relation to religion and society is offered by Clifford Geertz's 'Religion as a Cultural System', originally published in 1965, which is readily accessible in A Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach, ed. William Lessa and Evon Vogt, New York, Harper and Row, 1972. See also, C. Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures, New York, Basic Books, 1973. Comments on this interpretive process are also to be found in his essay 'Deep Play', from Myth, Symbol, And Culture, ed. C. Geertz, New York, W.W. Norton and Co., 1971.
5. We are indebted to Sandra Sizer for this phrase, which she coins in describing the 18th Century fundamentalist-revivalist hymn writers of the age. See S. Sizer, Gospel Hymns and Social Religion, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1978, Chapter 3. We should note too, that the view being expressed here is very Durkheimian. See his Elementary Forms of Religious Life (1912), Trans. J. Swain, New York, The Free Press, 1965, pp.31ff. For a discussion on Durkheim and power, especially 'power interests' in society as indicators of pathological (i.e., unhealthy) conditions within, the reader is referred to S. Fenton, R. Reiner & I. Hamnet, Durkheim and Modern Sociology, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Section 1 (b)

1. Wesley expressly noted the plan of order in his Preface to the 1877 Collected Hymns: 'The hymns are not carelessly jumbled together, but carefully arranged under proper heads, according to the experience of real Christians.'(pp. iv-v). For a discussion of the history of the use of hymns, see L.F. Benson, The English Hymn: Its Development and Use in Worship, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1915, and H. Davies, Worship and Theology in England, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975 (5 Volumes).
2. c.f. for a fuller explanation, J. Wimber, G. Kendrick and T. Virgo, Worship Conference, London, Vineyard Ministries International, 1989. This is a collection of 8 audio tapes and a written syllabus, recorded at the Brighton Conference Centre, 1989.
3. The 'blessing gesture': arms are fully extended in front of the worshipper, slightly raised, the palms of the hand facing outwards, directed towards the stage area, or overhead. Often the hands move in an 'encompassing motion', almost as though something intangible was being held or framed by the worshipper.
4. Songs of the Vineyard, No. 37.
5. Songs of love: 22, 25, 33, 34, 36; Songs of power: 37, 20, 1, 18; Songs of holiness: 11, 12, 13; Songs about praise: 43, 44, 9. Jeremy Begbie, in 'The Spirituality of Renewal Music: A Preliminary Exploration', Anvil, vol 8, no.3, 1991, pp.227-239, offers six different categories of song: exuberant praise to God; jubilant testimony and exhortation; intimacy; majesty; hushed reverence; battle.
6. See for example Songs of the Vineyard, No. 20.
7. For further discussion, see also J. Begbie, 'Renewal Music', Anvil, vol 8, no.3, p.230.
8. Songs of the Vineyard, No. 1. (Variations in the verses sometimes include replacing 'tears' for 'fears', and 'the' with 'my').
9. Songs addressed to 'You' account for almost 50% of Vineyard worship; songs to God as 'Lord', about 30%.
10. Songs of the Vineyard, No. 10
11. Songs of the Vineyard, No. 18.
12. Hardly any of Wimber's early songs are 'Battle Songs', although a good proportion of the material in Songs of The Vineyard (Vol 2) do fit this description (e.g. 152, 164).
13. See W.G. McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, New York, Ronald Press, 1959; B.A. Weisberger, They Gathered at the River, Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1958; W.R. Cross, The Burned Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850, New York, Harper and Row, 1961. This last book, although now over thirty years old, remains an unsurpassed history.
14. S. Sizer, Gospel Hymns and Social Religion, p.52. Although Sizer coins the term 'community of feeling', I mean something different in employing the term. For Sizer, the

'community of feeling' is located in the intense emotionalism of revivalism, which eventually becomes domesticated in late-nineteenth century rhetoric. My application of the term refers more explicitly to a transcendent community that identifies itself by organising and directing its feelings in worship, without reference to social or historical situations.
15. See the Unitarian Journal, Christian Examiner and Theological Review, Volume 4, 1827, pp. 357-70. See also G. Finney, Lectures (1835), Boston, Harvard Library Edition, 1960, p. 167. Finney warns against 'waiting for certain feelings, which someone else has had...'.
16. J. Wimber, Power Healing, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1986, pp. 159ff.
17. Songs of the Vineyard, no.5.

Section 1 (c)

1. Songs of the Vineyard, No. 49.
2. See Equipping the Saints, Volume 1, Number 6, Dec. 1987.
3. Songs of the Vineyard, No. 36.
4. For example, Wesley's hymn, 'Jesu, Lover of My Soul': 'While the nearer waters roll/ While the tempest still is high/ Hide me, O my Saviour, hide/ Till the storm of life is past/ Safe into the haven guide/ Oh, receive my soul at last.
5. Songs of the Vineyard, No. 18. c.f. the discussion of ambiguity in ideology in L. Gerlach & V. Hine, People, Power, Change, pp.169-174.
6. In worship songs, the simplistic mantra-like formulations, when repeated sufficiently, reduce the capacity for thinking. See Emille Durkheim's Elementary Forms of Religious Life (1912), trans. J. Swain, New York, Free Press, 1965, pp.411ff & pp.484ff. See also J. Begbie, Anvil, vol. 8, no.3.
7. See Wayne Booth's Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1974, p.17. For a discussion of self-validation and belief within fundamentalist cultures, the reader is referred to two articles of interest. The first is by D. Snow and R. Machalek, 'On the Presumed Fragility of Unconventional Beliefs', Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion, March 1992, vol.21, no.1., pp.15-26. Snow and Machalek argue that the power of plausibility structures provides believers with the certainty they require. Plausibility structures are themselves supported by a complex degree of self-validation that 'screens out' experiences and knowledge that would threaten existing belief structures. The second, by S.M. McFarland and J.C. Warren, in 'Religious Orientations and Selective Exposure Amongst Fundamentalists' (Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion, June 1992, vol.31., no.2., pp.163-174), examines cognitive dissonance, using the work of Peter Berger. McFarland and Warren argue that fundamentalists 'suspend' belief above reality, in order to address the complexity of the modern world with faith.

Section 1 (d)

1. An exception would be G. Cray, 'Justice, Rock and the Renewal of Worship', in R. Sheldon (ed), In Spirit and in Truth, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1988, p.3.
2. Walter Hollenweger, 'Music in the Service of Reconciliation', Theology, vol XCII, 1989, pp.276ff.
3. B. Castle, 'Hymns - More than Songs of Praise', Theology, vol XCIV, 1991, pp.101-106.
4. Wimber: "Some songs you just can't get out of your head, others you can't get out of your heart; worship is the essential foundation for every activity...our hope is that you will experience worship that is vital and intimate." (From the preface to Touching the Father's Heart, 1989). For a perspective from Restorationist circles, see C. Bowater, Creative Worship: A Guide to Spirit-filled Worship, Basingstoke, Marshall-Pickering, 1986.
5. A. Merriman, The Anthropology of Music, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1964.
6. S. Clegg, Frameworks of Power, pp.178-186.

Section 2 (a)

1. Songs of the Vineyard, No. 9. Again, we refer the reader to Durkheim, and his work on community and worship. An exemplary analysis can be found in J. Alexander (ed), Durkheimian Sociology: Cultural Studies, Cambridge, CUP, 1988.
2. From the song, 'More of You in my life'.

Section 2 (b)

1. N. Luhmann, Trust and Power, London, John Wiley and Sons Ltd., 1979 (combined edition). (Originally published in Stuttgart, Germany, 1973 and 1975 respectively). [Luhman presupposes a system of interaction in his work that is indebted to the work of Talcott Parsons. For a useful introduction to his work, see L.H. Mayhew, Talcott Parsons on Institutions and Social Evolution: Selected Writings, 1985, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.]
2. Ibid. (Luhmann), pp. 18ff.
3. Ibid. (Luhmann), p. 21. Part of the basis for this theorising can be found in G. Lakoff & M. Johnson, Metaphors We Live By, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981.
4. Songs of the Vineyard, No. 37.
5. Ibid., Nos. 1, 7, and 18.
6. N. Luhmann, Trust and Power, p. 58.
7. Songs of the Vineyard, No. 50.
8. Ibid., No. 18.
9. Ibid., No. 32.
10. Ibid., No. 34
11. A phrase borrowed from Berger's Social Construction of Reality, and echoed in The Heretical Imperative.

12. Songs of the Vineyard, No. 43.
13. L. Adey, Hymns and the Christian Myth, p. 153.
14. For a fuller discussion on the links between Christian Science and charismatic theology, see D.R. McConnell, A Different Gospel, Hendrickson, Peabody, Mass., 1988, and J. MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1992, pp.228ff.
15. This is Wimber's notion of Christological conformity, discussed in Chapter 3.
16. Personal correspondence with the Professor of Music Criticism at Bristol University: Letter dated 9/2/91.

Section 2 (c)

1. c.f. W. Edgar, Taking Note of Music, London, SPCK, 1986.
2. 'Major modes' employ a particular series of scales that convey 'cheerful' or 'joyous' moods; in contrast, 'Minor modes' employ a series of notes that possess a 'sadder' quality. Controversy rages over whether this is intrinsic to the physical nature of the music or simple convention.
3. Once again, this is a very Durkheimian idea. Society, in the form of the celebrating community, is power. See We Believe in the Holy Spirit, London, Church House Publishing, 1991, p.21. and also J. Hopewell, Congregation, London, SCM, 1987, for his discussion of 'adventure' as a dominant motif in charismatic fundamentalist texts.
4. A. Walker, Restoring the Kingdom, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1987 (2nd ed), chapter 13.
5. Songs of the Vineyard (vol 2), 54, 56, 70 and 80. Note especially Song number 70, in which the worshippers sing as though God were addressing them: "I will change your name. You shall no longer be called wounded, outcast, lonely or afraid...[you] shall be confidence, joyfulness, overcoming one, friend of God...". (Mercy Publishing, 1987).
6. Even in this song however, the words bear out our case (underlining mine):

> 'I am the wounded soldier
> and I will not leave the fight,
> because the Great Physician is healing me'.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE POWER OF GOD IN WIMBER'S THEOLOGY

1.a. The Power of God for Today: Wimber's Inductive Approach

It has been suggested above that Wimber's fundamental(ist) strategy for affirming Christian tradition in the face of modern religious pluralism and contemporary secularism is an inductive one. This is an ontology that seeks to supplement or validate historical or biblical analysis by seeking direct religious experience at first hand; in other words, attempting to authenticate traditional truth-claims about the power of God by reifying that power in the present. Wimber's brief discussion of the virgin birth in The Cross amply demonstrates this approach:

> Taking [the birth narratives] at face value and regarding the virgin birth as a historical fact will result in certain consequences. Among the most obvious is that it strongly suggests that miracles are possible. If one believes in the virgin birth of Jesus it should not be too difficult to believe that God can and does perform other miracles [1]

This pattern of interpretation - taking a historical text at face value, locating a primary experience of power within it, and then attempting to imitate or validate that same power in the present - is one that Wimber uses, with some variation and abridgements, many times. Other examples might include his treatment of prophecy as a form of judgement, a 'word of knowledge' being a word of power, since it places the subject under the authority of the word and speaker. Or, perhaps more commonly, the inductive strategy can be traced in the treatment of demon-possession, a form of oppression that continues today in precisely the same way that it was said to have done in Jesus' day: the power of darkness must be overcome by a greater force - the power of light.

As we noted in Chapter One, it is important to conceive of fundamentalism as something which is not simply propositional, but also in

terms of experiences and relationships, that offer a more complete universe to the believer. (We have already argued that this is a key weakness in Barr's work on fundamentalism.) This necessarily means that Wimber's work - in common with other fundamentalists - often defies accurate definition. To ask what Wimber means by 'the gospel', for example, is to invite a plurality of answers. True, Wimber is capable of exact and sophisticated expression, but to try and 'boil down' much of his theology would be to miss the point. For Wimber, the heart of the Christian faith resides in an experience of the power and love of God, not in a creed. Any 'articles of faith' or ideology that might be uncovered can only be there precisely because they have the power to induce this experience, in order that the forces of darkness might be overcome, and the believer be set free to become a child of God.[2] The question therefore necessarily arises: how is the power of God known today, and what evidence is there for it, as far as Wimber is concerned? Further still, how does that power empower individuals, and what are the effects? Indeed, is the power of God as demonstrable as Wimber would suggest?

1.b. Power in the Present: Riding the 'Third Wave'

We have already noted earlier Wimber's conviction that evangelism via signs and wonders is more effective than any form of programme evangelism. We have noted too, that within the inductive power circuit of this kind of fundamentalist community, there is an appeal to the strategic agency of revivalism Yet it would be a mistake to assume that Wimber has resorted to an unsophisticated mechanism here, coupled with an understanding of Jesus, God and the Spirit that is power-orientated. We shall examine Wimber's treatment of Jesus, God and the Spirit shortly, but for the moment, we must begin by noting Wimber's belief that he is just one (primary) operator in a more general 'power-movement' of God, (a nodal-point in an ever expanding power circuit would be Clegg's terminology), generally known as the 'Third Wave' (of the Spirit).[1]

The term 'Third Wave' is symbolic, used by those within the late twentieth century charismatic movement to describe the preeminent and expansive activity or movement of God in which they are participating. The

'First Wave' is generally regarded as early twentieth century Pentecostalism, and the 'Second Wave' the emerging post-second world war charismatic renewal movement, amongst which trends such as 'Restorationism' in Britain or the 'Jesus People' in the USA might be included. There are a variety of differing opinions within the movement as to what exactly it constitutes, but broad consensus could be reached on one factor at least, namely that the 'Third Wave' is intended to renew, revive and equip existing congregations and denominations, not create new ones although this may be a by-product.[2] Healings, prophecies, deliverance and signs and wonders are treated as normative, and therefore as phenomena that can be placed within existing patterns of denominational governance, and adapted to 'fit' as necessary. However, we must note here that Wimber has effectively begun his own network of churches, to carry forward the programme of the 'Third Wave'

Other distinctives within the movement might also include a belief in 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' at conversion, rather than as a second work of grace subsequent to being 'born again'. (Traditional adherents to Pentecostalism and some Assemblies of God churches would generally reject this possibility) However, 'multiple fillings' of the Spirit subsequent to being born again are expected, which might resemble what some would call 'baptism', Phenomena such as speaking in tongues and are not necessariy highly prized Although Wimber has run seminars on speaking in tongues, he does not, in common with other operators within the 'Third Wave', see it as a physical validation of spirit baptism, but rather as a language for intimate prayer, spiritual warfare or other ministries. Lastly, but of particular interest to our study, ministry under (or in) the power of the Spirit is the 'portal entrance'[3] into the 'Third Wave', rather than a spiritual experience for individuals, which typified the first two waves. To be in the 'Third Wave' is thus a code that validates the existing inductive approach, confirming that God is at work (in a distinctively powerful way) in the present, which authenticates the truth-claims made about God by the charismatic-fundamentalist group concerned.

1.c. Jesus, Supreme Model of Divine Power

If Wimber and his Vineyards generally regard themselves as moving within the 'Third Wave', the question naturally arises: which role models are available to induce that movement? It is in the person of Jesus that Wimber finds the ultimate evidence of divine power. Throughout Wimber's works, Jesus is consistently presented as a powerful personality who can take hold of and transform the inner life of others. He is the 'God-Man', an archetype or model who demonstrates God's actual supremacy over sickness, death and defeat [PP, tape 1, side A] Jesus acted and taught as one with a divine power and authority who is unlike anyone else; further still, because Christ lives, an encounter with him now leads to a radical transformation for the believer. They can have or become 'a new prince/princess in the Kingdom, a joint heir with Jesus, a priviledge of power, authority, and access ... a dual citizenship, a victorious living experience - not just a saved sinner' [PP, manual, p. 13]. For Wimber, the very essence of Christianity is the continuing experience of divine empowering through contact with Jesus or the Spirit. Thus, a demonstration of a relationship with God on the part of the believer must usually be a demonstration of empowerment in the present

It is Wimber's handling of Jesus, and most especially the significance of his death, that has attracted the fiercest criticism from evangelicals and other fundamentalists. Most of these critiques tend towards accusing Wimber of inattention to the redemptive work of Christ.' Whilst this might be partly true, it misses the actual distinctiveness of Wimber's christology. Wimber is not primarily concerned with the mystery of how Christ is two natures, although he does address this [DSG, pp. 87 - 95] Instead, Wimber places the works of Christ firmly as the basis for our Christian life, although the speculations about his person also have a place. Some of Wimber's earliest writing on Jesus illustrate precisely this. The seminal Signs, Wonders and Church Growth (part 1, 1984), treats Jesus as both a model of ministry and a power-transformer:

> Jesus came not only to bring the Kingdom of God, to save and heal people, but also to impart to others this healing ministry that they might share in bringing people under the Rule of God. We, as the Church, were commissioned by Jesus almost 2,000 years ago to announce the good news to all creation through the healing 'signs' that would accompany and authenticate the message wherever it was preached ... the transference of Jesus' healing ministry to others ... and the powerful exercise of it today is of the utmost importance if we hope to see the Kingdom of God reach the ends of the earth. [SWCG I, section 5, manual, p. 10.].

For Wimber, one of the primary tasks of Jesus was to be a model of divine power for the disciples. They were to observe Jesus' power over sickness and demons, copy the 'model' that Jesus used, and then attempt to emulate (rather than simply imitate) the process in the wider interests of expanding the work of God. 'Jesus' method was clearly to minister while his disciple watched, then to have them minister with him watching them or receiving their reports, and then to leave them doing it on their own' [SWCG I, sec. 5, manual, p. 10]. Jesus is thus a kind of power-broker, demonstrating power, and then sharing it, before giving it away to a small group of prepared and committed disciples.

In offering this perspective on Jesus, Wimber is standing within a broad fundamentalist tradition, especially championed by Pentecostals, that views Jesus as the preeminent model for spiritual experience. In this tradition, Christ encompasses the Christian faith as its pioneer and perfecter, an example for believers (John 13 : 15; 1 Peter 2 : 21), who teaches followers to become like the teacher himself (Luke 6 : 40). But Jesus is a role model not only for Christian character, but also for Christian experience - specifically spiritual experiences analogous to the ones preserved in the Gospels about him. In other words, Jesus as a holy human being, conceived by the Spirit and therefore entempling the Holy Spirit uniquely, becomes a prototype for those created in his image (born again).

The notion of Jesus as a preeminent model or demonstration of divine power is offered by Wimber in the context of his understanding of the establishment of the Kingdom of God. For Wimber, this kingdom is one that

is set up in opposition to the rule of Satan. The sharp dualism that this involves will be discussed in more detail later, but for the moment we should note that Wimber's commitment to the establishing of the Kingdom of God in the present leads to Jesus being assigned a more functional role than dynamic. Of course, Wimber does assert that Jesus is alive now. But his treatment of Jesus' earthly life appears to provide a rationale for confirming the trend of his inductive power framework. For example, his summaries of the life of Jesus usually focus on his works, and how they can be repeated today: there is far too little stress on aspects of Christ's life that (apparently) cannot be imitated, not least the atonement. Writing in The Kingdom of God (1985), he notes that Jesus offers a pattern for working against demon-possession, disease, aspects of nature, and ultimately, death. Jesus performed these works as necessary demonstrations of power, since believers themselves will have to deploy this same power if they are to further the work that Jesus began, namely defeating Satan:

> The Kingdom will arrive on a worldwide basis when the worldwide power of Satan is broken at the Second Coming of Jesus. Until then the battles go on, even though the decisive battle has been won at the cross. The call of the army is to rout Satan and his demons '

Whilst this treatment of Jesus to some extent explains some of the more basic ways in which divine power is wielded in Vineyard communities, it does not tell us much about how this in itself forms the basis for relating to God. Again, as with our observations on the ideology of worship, we are given a perspective on God by Wimber that allows for a degree of intimacy and interiority (connoted by the metaphor 'You' in worship), that acts as a counterbalance to the outward and exterior stress on power as a work, that affects the world and the believer in world occurrence (connoted by the metaphor 'Lord' in worship). How is this achieved? Quite simply, by stressing Jesus' relationship to God and the Spirit as a source of power·

> The secret of the sinless life of Jesus and his miraculous ministry is grounded in his relationship to the Father. Even though he was God, Jesus drew his power from an intimate, child-like relationship with the Father in heaven. The ability to hear what God is saying, to see what God is doing, and to move in the realm of the miraculous comes as

> an individual develops the same intimacy with and dependence upon the Father.[2]

So, the key to the effective exercise of the divine power of Jesus in the life of the believer is not just copying Jesus, but also developing 'the same relationship of intimacy, simplicity and obedience' [SWCG I, sec. 5., p. 8.]. Equally, however, Wimber is careful to point out that the Holy Spirit is alone the 'key to Jesus' power and effectiveness in his ministry'. Wimber sees the Spirit as the primary source of power in the life of God: God alone can give the power, which is the Spirit; Jesus alone can demonstrate its most effective use, which is gained via his intimacy and subordination to the Father. Thus, Wimber writes:

> [the] indispensable reason for [the Holy Spirit's] presence in the Christian's life is to give power ... The Spirit is the Christian's sole resource for supernatural power in doing the work of God.[3]

Given these remarks in this brief section about Jesus, we may summarise Wimber's thinking on the person of Christ in the following way. Firstly, Jesus is a nodal point that knew and communicated the power of God in a particular time and context, and still offers a pattern for today which believers can imitate. Jesus is alive as 'Lord' for the believer, but that Lordship is something that must be acted upon, via the power of the Spirit. Secondly, Jesus' divinity itself is confirmed in experiential terms. for those who follow him now, Jesus is a power model, through whom the power of the Spirit might be obtained. Thirdly, Jesus' power is in opposition to the power of Satan· the function of Jesus and his works of power was to undo those of Satan. Lastly, the power of Jesus is actually the power of the Spirit, given by the Father, working through the most effective agent possible: the person of Christ In other words, there is a latent doctrine of subordination present in Wimber's thinking, which is explicitly exposed when the theme of power is used as an interpretative key to his theology [4] However, in the light of these observations, we must now turn to look briefly at the theme of power in Wimber's pneumatology.

1.d Wimber's Pneumatology

It is perhaps not surprising to have noted in the last section that Wimber's Christology is essentially subordinationist. In common with other fundamentalists, there tends to be little in the way of an adequate doctrine of the Trinity, which must be partly traced to the dominant hegemonic ideology that functions in most fundamentalist communities. Because of the premium placed on authority, hierarchy, certainty and power structures, that compete with and confront the pluralist (exterior) world, a relational and mutual doctrine of power (which might be located in a Trinitarian doctrine) is too ambiguous and threatening to form the ideological basis for a fundamentalist community. Thus, it is not untypical to find the Father, the Bible (infallible work/power) or the Spirit (brute supernatural force) as dominant, with Jesus functioning as a figure or example that testifies to a higher power. We have already noted the geography of Wimber's hegemonic core-ideology, and although 'Lord' is a key metaphor in Vineyard worship, it is important to read 'Lord' as a code for conveying power and authority, not as a literal description of Jesus in relation to the Father or the Spirit. In this sense, Wimber stands within a long tradition of fundamentalists who have stressed the name (or names) of Jesus as primarily active agents that reify divine power, rather that truly describing it [1] Indeed, we can go further here, and suggest that Jesus' Lordship in Wimber's theology is a pure agent (nodal point) that communicates power, yet is not the real power in itself. Thus, on the one hand, Jesus' Lordship as emphasized by Wimber tends to deny the real humanity of Jesus in the life of the Trinity[2], and on the other, fails to give Jesus himself the same 'level' of power that the Father or the Spirit possess. Jesus is subordinate both to the will of the Father and the power of the Spirit.

Although Wimber notionally assents to a Trinity (see DSG, p. 77), he, in common with other fundamentalists, finds little real place for it, because it does not feature significantly in the bible, nor as a experiential fundament. There are some direct sociological consequences as a result The qualities of interdependence, equality and openness are

undervalued, and a hegemonic ideological structure put in their place. Leaders have control over power, and give it to whom they choose. as a commodity, power belongs to everyone, in equal proportions However, Wimber's reading of John's Gospel and the relationship between Jesus and the Father suggests that 'their relationship is the ideal, the pattern, the basis for our experience of the Father' [DSG, p. 77]. Fundamentalists like Wimber are generally more concerned about works (as a tool against pluralism, or as a nodal point that 'feeds' the fundamentalist community) than about 'persons', human or divine. Thus, fundamentalists are more 'propositional' (text or experience) than 'relational'; relational being too ambiguous and imprecise, usually threatening any hierarchy or hegemonic ideology Thus, the question naturally arises: how does the Holy Spirit operate in Wimber's thinking, given that it is, at least to him, the way in which God reveals himself, empowers and effects individuals, and leaves demonstrable 'signs' or evidence of God's activity?

Some preliminary observations are necessary here Firstly, the Spirit for Wimber is clearly a form of 'transformative power': it changes that which is alien to God, confirming it to his plan or likeness (DSG, pp 144 ff) Thus, we can agree with both Clegg and Wrong here, that the Spirit is not so much a person as a force.[3] Secondly, we must note that a number of Vineyard-Wimber worship songs explicitly address the Holy Spirit, usually as an intimate, loving force, that is waiting to settle upon the believer, rather than already being there. [4] Thirdly, that this passivity in worship can be very different in Wimber's 'clinics', where he often refers to the Holy Spirit 'falling' on believers with some degree of force, and certainly acting on individuals without their consent: indeed, he traces the genesis of Vineyard growth to precisely such a brute display of God's power.[5] This activity usually follows a simple invocation from Wimber or another Vineyard Pastor 'Come, Holy Spirit'. This may be repeated loudly and often, until there is a measureable impact on the congregation (sometimes the words 'more power Lord, more power', are used instead) Fourthly, further evidence for the 'brute force' pneumatology of Wimber lies in the metaphors sometimes used to describe it. For example, it is not uncommon for some exponents in Wimber's genre to speak of the Holy Spirit as a gun: 'it does not kill, however, but converts'! So the power of the Spirit can

be 'turned on others', compelling them to believe in God by demonstrable signs or wonders (miracles). This is certainly how Wimber interprets The Acts of the Apostles (see table in DSG, p. 209,1 and SWCG I, sec. 5.)[6] (So, Wimber portrays the Spirit as an 'unstoppable force' in exactly the same way that some other Protestant fundamentalists describe the word of God. too powerful for anyone to resist).

For Wimber however, the primary evidence for God's power is its expression in spiritual gifts (SWCG I, sec. 4., PE & PH, etc): 'spiritual gifts are the expression of God's power at work in the world'.[7] These gifts - ranging from prophecy to evangelism, and from healing to teaching - are given only to the waiting Church They are imparted by God and received by the elect, and are to be used as 'tools which enable one to fulfill the ministry required'.[8] The gifts also energise the individuals and communities who receive them, so that 'as they are used, service is effected by the power of God'.[9] Wimber has an extensive list of what might pass as a spiritual gift, and with the exception of tongues[10], all the gifts are deemed to be tools that either directly demonstrate the power of God to unbelievers, or build up the believing community to a point where it is more able to do the same We must also remember that Wimber's pneumatology must be set squarely in the context of his notion of the 'Third Wave': the Spirit can energise any congregation now, provided they are open to the new order receptivity will bring

For Wimber, receptivity by individuals and communities to the energising possibilities of the Holy Spirit is the key to empowerment. Wimber's pneumatology is basically a modern form of Pentecostalism, that stresses the 'need' for the Spirit, by pointing out that it is the active power behind Jesus in all his miraculous, authoritative and proclamatory activity. without the Spirit, Jesus would have been rendered powerless. Thus, the task of the Church is to be filled with that same power, with Jesus as the role model, and to be 'equipped saints', in order that others might also know the power of God, as Jesus made it known, in signs and wonders.

1 e. Opposition to Divine Power. Anti-Receptivity. Satan. Principalities and Powers

In considering Wimber's pneumatology, his treatment of Jesus, and his overall commitment to affirming the power of God, we must now consider how these 'powers' engage with the modern world. Wimber locates the power of God primarily in the miraculous· demonstrable 'signs' of God's supremacy over all existing powers. Occasionally however, power can also be located in teaching or in acts of service, but only in so far as they function as a 'sign' of power. So, the power of God is known in activity, not in personality or symbol. This is an important starting point for assessing the dualism of Wimber, to which we alluded earlier. Wimber treats power as a property that is in some sense relational in character: receptivity of divine power bestows properties upon the believer, who in turn can relate to the exterior powers/forces of the world in a new way. The gospel, according to Wimber, is the finding by believers of God as their God and as the source of power to overcome the opposing forces of Satan, sickness and the world (See PP, manual, pp. 43 ff, SW I, II & III, SWCG II, etc.). In separating divine power from all other powers so clearly, Wimber has to ensure that it is reified and exercised in a distinctive manner. This is vital to the maintenance of the hegemonic ideology, as well as the functioning of the inductive-power-circuit/framework that constitutes the community of believers In a sense, some form of dualism is inevitable for most fundamentalists The vigorous modernism and pluralism of contemporary society requires a response from a community whose power-ideology is under threat, and that response is nearly always schismatic. Ontological reductionism is met by ontological inductivism, which asserts that power as a property can again be known.

Reification - the 'result' or 'product' of power - is a constant problem for anyone wishing to discuss power relations. The matter is complicated, as many social scientists have pointed out, by the fact that there is no transitive verbal form of the word. Therefore to talk of power at all, one must use it as a noun, and to use a substantive word suggests the 'fact' of a 'substance'. Wimber emphasises both 'the power' itself and the dynamic quality of what it accomplishes. The question arises however, what happens when there is no 'evidence', either of 'the power' or its reification? In other words, what if there is a 'power-failure': a 'break' in the inductive circuit that mediates and reifies power? Wimber, in common with other charismatic fundamentalists, resorts to dualism, although his is of a fairly sophisticated kind. Four primary ways of dealing with reification failure can be traced in his work.

The first strategy that accounts for failure in the inductive circuit is an appeal to anti-receptivity. In other words, to deny that proper induction has taken place. It is in Wimber's treatment of healing and the believer that this is primarily found. Although he acknowledges that there are people who are not healed - including four people in Scripture 'not healed at the time' (PH, pp. 162 - 164) - the reasons for power failure are all explicitly referred to individual or communal non-receptivity of the (experiential) power source. not enough faith, unconfessed sin, corporate disunity in the body of Christ (weakens its power), incomplete or incorrect diagnosis, or lack of persistence in prayer.[2] This mechanistic attitude to reification is not surprising. Wimber needs 'signs' to validate the power of God in the present, in order to subvert the mechanisms of an unbelieving world. if no 'sign' appears, the methods for inducing those 'signs' must be checked, and made to work (See 'Today's tension with the miraculous world view', SWCG I, sec. 3).

A second strategy of interest is that of 'inner healing'. This is an area of 'ministry' specifically devoted to the inner-life of the believer, and it focusses on a loose cluster of concepts such as 'wholeness', 'fullness' and 'memory healing' - delivering the individual from the grip of painful memories (conscious or unconscious) that inhibit the free movement of the Spirit in the person's life (PH, p. 95).[3] As a strategy for reifying power, it tends to operate reactively, and is used as a technique for 'removing blockages' that prevent the natural flow of the power of the Holy Spirit. The very nature of its inward, personal context however, guarantees to some degree its effectiveness at some point. This whole process is aided and abetted by the worship offered, which tends to make intimacy with God an internal, personal event. Reification can therefore be said to have taken place spiritually, internally or psychologically, as a hostage against the absence of a tactile, observable 'sign'.[4]

Thirdly, we must consider the recourse to Satan as a strategy. If reified power results in praise being offered to God, failure to reify tends to lead to blaming. Addressing Satan, demons and the spirit world is a prominent feature of Wimber's work, and 'deliverance' from demonic oppression or possession plays a significant part in his ministry. The inculcation of demonology in Wimber's work however, does not just begin when there is a need to find a scapegoat. Wimber, looking to Jesus as a model, notes that 'the manifest presence of God always causes the demons to show themselves ... demons will shriek loudly and do many other things, sometimes in sheer terror, and sometimes as evasionary tactics' (SWCG II, sec. 6., p. 3). Wimber more generally describes this as a 'power encounter': the forces of darkness being met by the power of God. Christ is the supreme master of the 'power encounter' since in all his dealings with the demonic, he appears to have truimphed. For Wimber, Satan is still active, opposing God's power by spreading sin, sickness and misery in order to weaken the effectiveness of believers.

According to Wimber, it appears that anyone can actually be demonised. Clearly those outside the community of believers are most at risk. Wimber consistently refers to 'entry points', moments, events, traumas or sins through which demons can gain access into the soul and body of a person, and 'bind' them (SWCG II, sec 5, 6 & 7). Wimber goes further than most fundamentalists here however, in asserting that even spirit-filled believers are not immune from such demonic oppression or possession. In Deliverance. Can a Christian be Demonised? (SWCG II, sec. 7), Wimber posits a 'grid', ranging from no demonic control to total demonic control. Believers can be sifted by Satan, tempted and then finally attacked, resulting in the believer becomming possessed to a greater or lesser degree by an agent of Satan (demon). Thus, it is possible for a believer to both minister in the power of the Holy Spirit and be afflicted by a demon, all at the same time

Clearly, in this third strategy, what Wimber is inculcating is an alternative inductive power circuit, which can account for failure, defeat, sickness and setbacks. It exists, at least in part, due to Wimber's inability to recognise the neurotic element present in his dominant hegemonic ideology Since sin, struggle, persistent perseverance and 'ordinary reality' are not common features of Vineyard worship, the account for power failure inevitably resides in a 'mythic' or Satanic circuit. In saying this, I am not denying the reality of evil itself, nor even the possibility that Satan might exist. I am simply maintaining that this third strategy of Wimber's is definitively dualist, and can therefore be justifiably called neurotic. For Wimber, one of the primary tasks of the gospel is to deliver people out of bondage. non-believers are subject to the power of Satan, until being delivered, via a power-encounter, by Christ.[5] In other words, individuals are subject to either one kind of power or another: as with Wimber's pneumatology, the stress on force allows little space for personal responsibility and freedom for the subject. This kind of dualism places a great weight on the agents of power: demons or exorcists. In Wimber's view, we are locked into the same sort of struggle Jesus had.[6] Consequently, if a believer - especially a prominent one - fails to be an effective agent, or more seriously, is found to be

'afflicted' themselves, the source of their power must be checked and in some cases removed by Wimber or others, in case it is abused, thus distorting the power-flow in the community. For example, two prominent Vineyard Pastors have been dismissed for sexual misconduct in the last five years ('Satan entered them'); one had his prophetic office 'stripped' from him, the other took part in a public 'laying off of hands' performed by Wimber, a deontological process withdrawing ministerial power. (Both still remain part of the Vineyard however.)[7]

A fourth and final strategy worth mentioning is the referral to the more general category of 'powers and principalities' by Wimber. Sometimes, a natural phenomenon such as a storm can be 'demonic' in origin: this is certainly how Wimber would read Jesus' 'calming of the storm' at the Sea of Galilee Wimber maintains that Jesus addresses the malign spirit causing the storm. only then is there calm (Spring Harvest Address, Easter Day, 1992). More usually however, Wimber speaks of general malign spiritual forces that are said to influence cultural trends and localised tendencies (e.g. 'a spirit of apathy reigning over a city'). Wimber has made some use of this strategy, although he was sceptical about their existence as late as 1986.[8] However, positing their existence does give believers a specifically generalised account for why they might not be 'breaking through' in a certain place. The Vineyard-Wimber response to the problem is usually to engage in some type of 'spiritual warfare', and attempt to remove the 'blockage' by powerful, accurate prayer (see SW I, II & III).[9] Again, as with Wimber's pneumatology, we must note Wimber's extended use of the violent 'shooting'/'gun' metaphors used to describe this spiritual activity territorial spirits reigning over places are to be 'brought down'.[10]

1.f. Evaluation

In analysing Wimber's fundamentalist theology thus far, a number of distinctive ideas are becomming clear. Firstly, Wimber's assertion that the power of God is known today is advanced in two different ways. On the one hand, the power of God is known in the inner life of the believer, either via an experience of intimacy with the Father, or via a more specific claim such as 'inner healing', in which the hidden or inner parts of one's life are 'touched' by God ' On the other hand, the power of God is known in tangible, observable 'signs' or 'wonders': miracles that occur in the midst of the believing community that can be used as testimony or evidence to demonstrate God's power to unbelievers. These are both primary forms of reification (i.e. results of power) for Wimber's followers. Secondly, the directionality of these manifestations is further reification· the spiritual or numerical growth of the affected or witnessing congregation is further testimony to God's (demonstrable) power Thirdly, Jesus himself offers a 'model' of both the property of power and its relational capacities. Jesus, obedient to the Father and filled without by the power of the Holy Spirit, offers an ontological and operational pattern for believers Submitting to God and being open to the Spirit - as Jesus was - means believers can not only mimic Jesus' works, but also be conformed to his likeness, becomming like him It is at this point, amongst others, that some conflation between the 'opus dei' and 'opus hominum' can take place in the Vineyard community, since the directionality of Wimber's theology ultimately points to a blurring of these distinctions. Thus, the power of God is known through his present agents: those, like Wimber, committed to a 'signs and wonders ministry' This leads to a hierarchy of powers in the Vineyard, which is partly due to the hegemonic core-ideology and the absence of any real trinitarian doctrine that stresses mutuality, or finds a place for person or humanity of Jesus.

Wimber's explicit dualism can be primarily located in his explanations for power failure Although sin and personal responsibility play their part in his theology, they receive nothing like the emphasis that demons,

powers and principalities receive. An alternative inductive power circuit is thus posited by Wimber, with a different directionality ending in powerlessness. The inward life is subjected to bondage, the outward 'signs' for the individual are 'sickness', or perhaps even death, rather than empowerment, the communal 'signs' become disunity, numerical and spiritual decline, rather than reified growth. In all this, Satan is presented as the proto- type of destruction, who would counter demonstrations of God's power with demonstrations of his own. In Wimber's writing, Satan has virtually become incarnate, as tangible a person as Jesus was.[2] Of course, this emphasis serves the alternative (demonic) inductive power circuit very well, and the focus on works rather than persons keeps alive the possibility of validating the power of God today by repeating works. Given these observations however, it is now appropriate to take a closer look at <u>how</u> it is said divine power empowers believers.

2. How Divine Energy Empowers Individuals

2 a Receptivity by Individuals

Wimber's teaching on the power of God for today rests on his hegemonic core-ideology, which includes a stress on the Fatherhood of God, the power of the Spirit, and Jesus as a 'model' for successful power encounters However, even Wimber acknowledges that divine power can only be truly experienced when encountered through agents that embody such power. At the same time, Wimber does not rule out God acting decisively beyond his agents - the 'Third Wave' theology implicitly accepts this - yet, receptivity by the individual remains an important key as to how empowerment is achieved

According to Clegg, divine power might empower human beings via a network involving the operation of charismatic and competent authority upon 'nutrient power'', which in turn is attributed to or projected on to the character of God The operation of these powers produces predictably beneficial effects for the individual and fundamentalist community, who become convinced of the truth of their gospel, and then allow themselves to be further influenced by agents or leaders whose charismatic and competent authority produces similar trends

As far as fundamentalist communities like the Vineyard are concerned, the receiving of divine power comes in two particular ways. The first is an initial 'accepting' of the historicity and consequences of 'the cross', Christ's death for the individual, that secures their place in the life of God. (Although we shall deal with 'signs and wonders' in [church] history later, a focus on the cross belongs in this section). The second is a stress on the ongoing need to be 'moving in the Spirit', accepting empowerment daily. In both cases, Wimber stresses the flow of power that comes through these agents (cross and Spirit), and that they can flow through the believer, provided they are in intimate touch with God, and therefore within the overall power circuit.

Receptivity is therefore an active dynamic, especially within fundamentalist groups The requirement - indeed necessity - of confirming and supplementing historical analysis by seeking direct religious experience at first hand is a primary feature of the inductive strategy. Traditional truth-claims about God (e.g., 'he died for my sins') must be authenticated by a demonstration of the power of God in the present (e.g., 'I feel born again'). In the sections that follow, we shall explore the link between the cross and the spirit in Wimber's theology, as it relates to individuals being empowered by divine energy. Wimber himself does not explicitly make any real link between the two, but I want to suggest that the one cannot be understood without the other Both are individual yet inter-connected agents of divine power that reify themselves in the life of the believer

2 b. The Cross. Christ's Redemptive Work

Given the explicit dualism of Wimber's theology and pneumatology, we must now examine the place and weight that Wimber assigns to the death of Christ. He addresses the power of the cross in most of his works, but has also produced a thesis (tapes plus manual) that specifically deals with the subject (The Cross, 1986). This particular work must be seen as, at least in part, a response to some evangelicals, who, dissatisfied with his charismatic emphasis, accused him of not being 'cross-centred'.' Wimber's response on this matter appears, at first sight, to contain a number of 'fundaments' about the cross that would appeal to both classical Pentecostal and evangelical believers. For example, Wimber affirms the traditional Pentecostal claim that 'by his stripes we are healed', taken by many to mean that physical healing comes via the power of Christ's sacrifice and suffering Equally, Wimber stresses that 'sins are forgiven' because of Calvary the cross means spiritual salvation for those who believe Wimber also affirms a doctrine present in many charismatic movements, namely that the cross was a turning point in the war between Satan and God. In this view, Satan attempts - via Judas, the Jews or the Romans - to kill Jesus, and succeeds in doing so at Calvary, only to find (unwittingly) that the cross is a victory for God, and Satan has accidentally pressed his own 'self-destruct button' (TC, manual, p. 55):

> At the cross, where the devil had planned to parade himself as victor, he was, instead, conquered with all his forces and powers. The enemy's plan back-fired' He thought he had won when in fact he had lost.

There are of course, perfectly respectable antecedents in classical Christian spirituality for all the above views. What then, is distinctive about Wimber's vision of the cross? Certainly, whichever doctrine Wimber affirms in his theology of redemption, one thing is consistently clear throughout his thinking The cross is a victory. This victory is for individual Christians to realise and reify in their lives, and it brings benefits to the believer who understands and practises its power. But there is more to Wimber's theology of the cross than this, namely the explicit power themes present therein.

In the first place, Wimber affirms that the death of Christ brings salvation That salvation is from 'the power of sin', 'the curse of the law' and 'from wrath' (TC, manual, p. 66) However, the actual salvific event of Calvary belongs to a wider context:

> The purpose of God to bring man back to him is demonstrated in the Christ-Event This event includes the whole of his redemptive life .. his sacrificial death, his powerful resurrection, his ascension back to the Father All of these separate parts are one event.[2]

Wimber explicitly states that no one part of Christ's life has significance over another each individual event in the total Christ-Event is an invitation from God to humanity. The underlying substance of that invitation is that believers may each know the redemptive power of God personally The fruits of redemption - knowing the power of God - are universally available, but only reified in the lives of believers: those who have accepted their need of it, and have been regenerated or 'born again'.[3] Once this is done, a believer may be a new prince or princess in the Kingdom, and a joint heir with Jesus, believers will experience 'a privilege of power, authority, and access ... a dual citizenship, a victorious living experience - not just (being) a saved sinner' (PP, tape 1, side b manual, p 13).

Beyond this, Wimber's remarks about the effects of salvation, although diverse and multifarious, can be reasonably divided into four distinctive categories. Firstly, the salvific Christ-Event makes spiritual, moral and physical regeneration possible, but only after repentance has taken place. Believers must begin by recognising their own weakness, vulnerability and handicap (of whatever kind), and renounce their own powers. Only then can regeneration take place, in which the believer is 'impregnated by the very seed of God' (TC, manual, p. 77), and then deemed to be a new creation. Secondly, Wimber also stresses that salvation is 'justification', in which the sins of believers are forgiven, following Christ's atonement. Further still, Wimber maintains that justification also confers acquittal from punishment (by God) that was due for sin and graciously reconciles believers to God Thirdly, salvation is also adoption, in which the believer is conformed by a combination of grace and submission into the image of Christ. 'Sonship implies responsibility ... It is inconceivable that we should enjoy a relationship with God as his child without accepting the obligation to imitate the Father and cultivate the family likeness' (TC, manual, p. 80). Fourthly, Wimber claims that salvation brings sanctification, although this is both indicative and imperative. On the one hand, believers are already sanctified by Christ's atonement. Yet on the other, sanctification is an ongoing process, requiring a dependence on the 'power of the Holy Spirit' as transformation continues.

In Wimber's soteriology therefore, we find a primary assertion about the power of God. In Christ's redemptive life and work, the believer is regenerated, justified, adopted and sanctified. In each of these events or states the believer 'plugs' into a knowledge and experience of God's power, which gives them freedom from the powers that previously held them, be they sickness, sin or whatever. So, the Christ-Event is a victory in its entirety: a show of God's strength and power. Nowhere does Wimber see the life of Christ (or his death) as a sharing in weakness or defeat with humanity. The power themes in Wimber's soteriology are therefore at their strongest when he describes the effects of the Christ-Event. He conceptualises it in terms of conflict, of bondage and liberation. There are struggles - between the flesh and Spirit, Satan and God, between heavenly and demonic powers - which the power of God alone can, has and

does overcome The ultimate function of Christ's death was, therefore, to 'release power' (DSG, pp. 108 ff). The power of God becomes accessible to believers, provided they find the courage to trust in it and be reifiers of it.

What is clear from analysing Wimber's soteriology is that regeneration, justification, adoption and sanctification are themselves power-terms. In turn, each of them is used inductively by Wimber: their historical truthfulness must necessarily be confirmed by the believer somehow seeking a direct experience of the power first-hand Such an observation partly explains why Wimber devotes so much time to 'testimony' when dealing with salvation. Although we have not analysed these testimonies, Wimber's use of story, the actual narrative account of how a believer 'came to be saved', is extensive. The more abstract theology of how one is saved, and from what, is not of primary interest to Wimber His concern is to see the power of God reified in the life of believers, which for him, more than adequately supplements any historical or theological analysis

In summarising Wimber's soteriology, we locate four distinct power themes Firstly, there is a contradiction in his theology. On the one hand, Wimber invests too much dependence in signs and wonders as agents. He consistently argues that signs and wonders are more likely to impress non-believers and convert them. Wimber derides what he calls 'programme evangelism', yet proposes his own version: if believers initiate a programme of signs and wonders, this will be more effective than other programmes. So, in common with other fundamentalists, Wimber explicitly places his faith in an infallible or inerrant agent. (It could be the Pope, the Bible, or signs and wonders). Yet Wimber also states that the initiative and effective power in redemption is God's. he repeatedly insists there is no self-redemption of any kind Further still, redemption is only for those who consciously choose to opt into God's power and out of the powers that presently bind them. Believers are thus those who chose, and are now the chosen (TC, manual, p 78). Secondly, Wimber does not differentiate between the atonement and incarnation: the whole Christ-Event is seen as having redemptive value However, we must note that any

discussion by Wimber of the incarnation usually focusses on the embodiment of power (the Spirit in the human-divine Jesus), and ignores, more or less totally, any real stress on the actual weakness or suffering of Jesus. The cross itself was a key power encounter, in which Satan unwittingly released the power of God by killing Jesus, so believers may now have access to the resurrection power.[4] Thirdly, we must note the dualistic and dramatic elements present in his soteriology. triumph, victory and deliverance are concepts extensively deployed in Wimber's presentation of redemption - the struggle with dark forces (sin, demons, etc.) - is ended ultimately in the victory of Christ. Fourthly, this redemption brings power to believers, in the specific forms of regeneration, justification, adoption and sanctification, enabling the Holy war against Satan to continue. Given these remarks, we must now turn again to the Spirit and its empowering effects, in the light of Wimber's soteriology.

2.c. The Coming of the Holy Spirit

Although Wimber asserts that it is Christ's life, death and example that make victory possible for the believer, there is a sense in which the Christ-Event is a phenomenon that is interior and personal to the individual respondent. Regeneration, justification, adoption and sanctification are all existential states that may or may not influence the actual community seeking corporate empowerment. We have already indicated that Wimber's Christology is probably subordinationist in character, and most especially in relation to the Spirit. Wimber's problem with 'ordinary' commitment to Christ is that it does not necessarily produce any transformation in the church or in the world. In particular, Wimber is often critical of other fundamentalists who stress personal commitment to Christ, yet do not work to see the power of God reified in the body of the congregation.[1] It is for this reason that Wimber places a high stress on the exterior and corporate properties of the Holy Spirit. Following Jesus can be almost a private affair, but an encounter with the Spirit - according to Wimber - is nearly always public, and therefore the Spirit and the encounter itself are agents of empowerment for the body of Christ.[2]

We have already noted in previous sections that Wimber's interest in the Holy Spirit extends well beyond the traditional Pentecostal fundaments of baptism in the Spirit followed by speaking in tongues. Wimber's focus lies in 'signs and wonders' (works of the Spirit), which empower and motivate believers in their faith, and, further still, provide a demonstration of God's power to non-believers, causing a reaction that leads to numerical and spiritual 'church growth'. It is my contention that Wimber's treatment of the phenomenology of the Spirit supports our earlier observations about his pneumatology That is, the Spirit is a brute, supernatural force, that allows little space or freedom or individuality. Also, that the Spirit is characteristically dominant, which necessarily links with the hegemonic ideology already identified. those who can most effectively wield and reify the power of God's Spirit are, necessarily, the leaders and apostles of the Vineyard churches. How though, does an individual believer become empowered? There are essentially two stages in

the process and to answer the question, we shall focus particularly on the phenomenological aspects.

The first stage in the process is to be overcome by the Spirit Blane Cook, a former Vineyard Pastor, speaks of individuals being 'overloaded' with the Spirit's power.[3] This is a metaphor that is explicitly intended to convey the idea of overloaded electrical circuits, such that fuses blow, or components temporarily overreact to the power surge. The phenomena that accompany such a manifestation (i.e , when the Spirit settles on an individual) are enormously varied, and according to Vineyard understanding, can indicate slightly different things. For example, a person shaking (apparently) uncontrollably or involuntarily is deemed to suggest either resistance to the Spirit, or, unusual openness, resulting in 'overload'. Increased respiration, falling over ('slain in the Spirit'), laughter or weeping, all taking place during Wimber's clinics, are said to be responsive signs to the powerful action of the Spirit on the individual. Fluttering eyelids and excessive perspiration may also indicate the same. Occasionally, believers who are praying for a particular person will locate a 'Hot Spot', an area on the person's body that is giving off unusual heat: believers are directed to 'minister' to such place, although a 'Hot Spot' does not necessarily indicate a physical problem - it could be spiritual or emotional.

The phenomenon of being 'slain in the Spirit' has already been mentioned a happening in which an individual is knocked down and collapses under the force or weight of the Spirit's settling on that person. Sometimes it is held to be a form of admonishment, laying low those who oppose the Spirit (or the Vineyard leaders) either through pride, sin or resistance. At other times, it is held to be gentler, such that the believer is simply overcome with bliss and rapture. Yet whichever way this phenomenon occurs, it is always orientated towards reducing the autonomy and control of the individual, in order to ultimately empower them It is thus a form of domination, in which the Spirit forces itself on the believer, in order to transform them Of course, this activity is underpinned by the ideology present in the Vineyard worship both 'You' and

'Lord' are metaphors of force and domination in themselves, which necessarily imply a reduction in capacity for the believer to resist God.

Empowerment for the believer arises directly out of such experiences, since they are held to be deep encounters with God, and the individual is often convinced of some kind of inner transformation. But empowerment can also result from observing more exterior, public phenomena. This is the second stage or phase of empowerment For example, 'words of knowledge' are often given out at Wimber's clinics. These are personal insights about an individual that are held to be a specific revelation from God, that could not have been revealed in any other way except by the Spirit Sometimes they are very general (e g , "There are some deaf people here tonight, who want to be healed"), but on other occasions, they may be most particular (e g , "There is a woman here having an affair - she knows she must repent - the Lord says you must stop seeing Martyn") Wimber himself claims to have such words of knowledge, as do many of his followers, although at Wimber's clinics, it is usually only Wimber who actually broadcasts such things These words of knowledge however, could easily be dubbed 'words of power', for that is what they are' They indicate to the believers that God is powerfully present, they establish those who give such words as men of power, they establish a form of domination, since under these conditions, nothing can ultimately be hidden from God or the leadership As with the other phenomena associated with the activity of the Spirit, empowerment arises out of the individual being possessed and controlled by the Holy Spirit in such a way that it is useless for the true believer to try and resist. The only path open is to submit to the power, to be filled with it, and then to be animated by it.

2 d. Evaluation

This Chapter has briefly examined the theological and phemenological affirmations of divine power that Wimber places before his followers. The inductive power circuit, in to which he is locked as a strategy to counter the effects of modernity, demands a close relationship between theology and proof, between faith and action In all the areas we have touched on - pneumatology, soteriology, phenomenology and dualism - the kind of power Wimber believes in appears to be one of dominance. It is not however, dominance for its own sake. It is a dominance that is present in the heart and character of God, that is intended to empower human beings. Where the Spirit is present, signs and wonders follow, and church growth occurs. Thus, the kind of power Wimber alludes to is what Rollo May calls 'nutrient power', which is attributable to God as its source. The operation of the power, even if forced by God or his agents, always produces beneficial effects upon the receivers, who become convinced of the truth of the gospel, and of the divine character (love and power) that bestowed the blessing. In turn, the charismatic and competent authority of the agent is also validated. For Wimber, this is supremely Jesus: the ultimate power agent, who was best able to reify God's power, either by his total obedience to God, or by his consistently victorious power encounters with Satan. The task of the ordinary believer is to be an imitator of Christ: to be a person of total obedience, total commitment, and of great faith Empowerment for individuals and the congregations will come to all who see Jesus and his works as an ideal role model for today.

Clearly, in the type of power structure encountered in the Vineyard, there are going to be problems arising directly from this inductive theological strategy These problems, I would hold, are common to most fundamentalist groups. For example, it will always be difficult for reifiers (i.e. human agents who, say, perform miracles or prophesy) of God's power to differentiate themselves from the actual power. The power of personality and individual charisma in the task of persuading people to accept God's power is a vital issue in the potential conflation, yet one that is often left unacknowledged. The stress on obedience and submission

as a precondition to empowerment, again, with Jesus serving as a role model, sets up a potentially damaging ecclesiology, in which the ordinary believers might be abused. Equally, the weight given to the power of God as an unstoppable force, both in theology and in practice, can leave little room for individual freedom, for choice and for debate

Lastly, the whole question of agency is largely unresolved in Wimber's works. For example, on the one hand, 'signs and wonders' are an immutable divine agency for congregational growth. On the other, Wimber sees these phenomena as programmatic - an agent to be introduced as a stimulant to growth. In reading Wimber, it is sometimes very difficult to know if he is talking about divine or human agency when he discusses instruments of power, or both The confusion, no doubt, arises out of the conflation that already takes place over power in the Vineyard network: believers do not seem to be able to distinguish between Wimber's power and the power of God. This is, in fact, a fairly common problem in fundamentalist groups For example, believers sometimes have trouble distinguishing between the (inerrant) text and the (guru/infallible) interpreter. In their minds, there will be a notional clarity about the difference between divine and human power, and divine and human agency. However, in practice, the belief tends to be much more blurred.' All of the above comments have rich implications for studying the Vineyard churches themselves, and it is to the question of power in the church that we therefore now turn.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

Section 1 (a)

1. John Wimber, The Cross, 1986, Anaheim, California, Mercy Publishing, (manual, p.5, tape no.1).
2. The language of experience contains perhaps as many problems as the language of power. The most serious one is the danger of imprecision, but, like power-language, experience-language can still be of service provided it is carefully deployed. For example, instead of 'the experience of divine power', one could speak of the existential encounter or receptivity, or of the individual being enabled by the divine. One needs to overcome the rather static quality of the word 'experience' in English. What is meant by 'an experience of divine power' by Wimber is not just a sense of the numinous, nor even just 'a heart strangely warmed'. By 'experience' Wimber means an empowering encounter resulting in an ontological change.

Section 1 (b)

1. See C.P.Wagner, Church Growth: State of the Art, Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale House, 1989, p.37. The term 'Third Wave' was coined by Wagner: 'The first wave was the Pentecostal movement, the second the charismatic movement, and now the third wave is joining them'. (C.P. Wagner, The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit, Ann Arbor, Vine, 1988, p.13). Wagner sees the Third Wave as a movement of the Holy Spirit among evangelicals beginning in the 1980's; it is described as being 'distinct from [but] very similar to the first and second waves.' Wagner himself dislikes being labelled as a 'charismatic', and does not necessarily share the views propounded by other Third Wave leaders. Nevertheless, we may agree with J. MacArthur when he describes Third Wave belief as 'an obsession with sensational experiences and a preoccupation with apostolic charismata: tongues, healings, prophetic revelation, words of knowledge and visions.' (Charismatic Chaos, p.130).
2. See C.P.Wagner, 'A Third Wave?', Pastoral Renewal, July - August 1983, pp.1-5; 'The Third Wave', Christian Life, Sep 1984, p.90ff.
3. See C.P.Wagner, 'Church Growth', in A Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, (Eds: S.M.Burgess, G.B.McGee and P.H.Alexander), Grand Rapids, Zondervan, pp.184ff.

Section 1 (c)

1. Power Points, p.43.
2. Signs, Wonders and Church Growth I, manual, p.8, sec.5.
3. Ibid.
4. Subordinationism as a term is intended to convey the notion that Jesus is subordinate to the will of the Father

and the power of the Spirit. Wimber's brand of subordinationism does not correspond to any mainstream heresies that go by the same name in the first four centuries. Wimber's 'hierarchy of being' most closely resembles Origen's pre-Nicene Christology, in which the Father is the ultimate one, and the Logos-Spirit as a mediating link between ultimate and created essences. The place of Jesus in this non-economic Trinity is as exemplar.

Section 1 (d)

1. A strong emphasis on the name of Jesus undoubtedly originates from the influential Oneness Pentecostal Movement of the early twentieth Century. Oneness Pentecostalism (OP) first emerged in 1914, when some Assemblies of God Ministers, influenced by nineteenth century revivalism and holiness movements, challenged Trinitarian theology. In particular, baptism according to a Trinitarian formula was rejected, and believers re-baptised only in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (following Acts 2:38). By the late 1920's, a distinctive emphasis on devotion to the name of Jesus had become apparent in hymnody, piety and teaching, as a source of spiritual power. The use of the name of Jesus as an almost 'magic' word or formula, that can mechanically transform situations and people, is present in many fundamentalist groups today, including some who would claim to be orthodox Trinitarian.
2. See for example The Dynamics of Spiritual Growth, pp.64ff. Although Wimber notionally assents to a Trinity here, his ultimate power theology denies it. Whilst it is true that Wimber himself would be unhappy about being accused of being non-Trinitarian, his theology of power is so deeply hierarchical, that it is impossible to have anything that could be construed as an economic trinity. In fact, we may go further here, and suggest that the dissolution of the Trinity is inevitable in fundamentalist groups. The Oneness Pentecostals eventually became Unitarian in outlook, because their hegemonic ideology placed the 'name' of Jesus as the ultimate source of their spiritual power. From the other end of the spectrum, some modern conservative evangelical movements like the British-based Proclamation Trust find the Trintity problematic, as it does not appear to be sufficiently grounded in Scripture.
3. D.H.Wrong (Power: Its Forms, Bases and Uses), asserts that power is basically force.
4. Songs of the Vineyard I, no.4, or Songs of the Vineyard II, no.44, would be excellent examples.
5. Naming and invoking the Spirit with the words "Come, Holy Spirit" is a cue for the Spirit to operate with some force at Wimber's clinics. At the behest of the leader, the invoking of the Spirit is said to produce dramatic and beneficial effects on the congregation. Only leaders already open to the Spirit can invoke it effectively. Wimber is fond of pointing to the failure of Simon Magus and the Jewish

exorcists, recounted in the early chapters of Acts. For accounts of what happens when "Come, Holy Spirit" is uttered, see Power Evangelism, pp.39ff and pp.147ff, and Signs, Wonders and Church Growth I.

6. Although I have only heard associates of Wimber use this metaphor, Wimber himself often speaks of the Holy Spirit 'blowing people away', or, occasionally, minds being 'blown'. Both phrases imply force that has violent potentiality. Modern revivalists such as Benny Hinn use the mechanistic metaphor of guns/shooting much more readily. See B.Hinn, Good Morning Holy Spirit, Milton Keynes, Word, 1991.
7. SWCG I, sec.5., p.1.
8. Ibid., p.1.
9. Ibid., p.3.
10. Speaking in Tongues tends to be de-emphasised by those who are advocates of the 'Third Wave' in connection with church growth. This is, in my view, for three purely practical reasons: 1. Some people who 'minister in the power of the Spirit' do not speak in tongues; 2. emphasis on tongues tends to produce division and strife in congregations and denominations; 3. an emphasis on tongues does not appear to produce church growth, whereas, it is held, signs and wonders do.

Section 1 (e)

1. See the sections on 'Service' and 'Teaching', in SWCG I.
2. Power Healing, p.164.
3. Sam Thompson, 'Seminar Notes', in SWCG II.
4. An excellent example of this can be viewed in Kevin Springer's (Ed) Power Encounters (San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1988). In a Chapter by Mike Flynn ("Come, Holy Spirit"), Flynn describes an encounter with a woman who needed 'inner healing' (pp.140-148). See P. Selby, Liberating God, London, SPCK, 1990, for a useful critique of internalised, fulfillment-centred approaches to healing.
5. Wimber frequently describes exorcisms, both in literature and at rallies. See Power Healing, pp.111 ff. His demonology is inventively dualist, giving rise to some novel analogies. For example, in an unpublished "Healing Seminar" (3 tapes, 1981, tape 1), he states: 'There are many demons that don't have a body. Having a body [for a demon] is like having a car. They want to have a car so they can get around. If they don't have a body, they're a second class demon. They're not first class. I'm not kidding you. That's the way it works. And so [to them] having a body is a big deal. That's why they won't want to give it up.'
6. SWCG II, manual, p.1.
7. Confirming this information is difficult, as those sources providing the information wish to remain confidential.
8. See Conference notes, Teach Us to Pray, 1986.
9. C.P.Wagner, Territorial Spirits: Insights into Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare from Nineteen Christian Leaders, Chichester, Sovreign World Publishing, 1991.

10. Ibid., p.39.

Section 1 (f)

1. But one can also actually touch God. See Touching the Father's Heart, (Worship series: manual plus tapes), 1990.
2. Wimber contradicts himself on what power Satan actually has. In Power Healing, for example, readers are told that they have nothing to fear from Satan: he is not like God, since he is created by him and therefore subordinate to him. Satan's 'opposite' enemy of the same strength is the Archangel Michael (p.117). Yet these assertions need to be contrasted with the power and capacities ascribed to Satan in Power Points, The Kingdom of God, and parts of SWCG II.

Section 2 (a)

1. We are indebted to Rollo May for this phrase. See Power and Innocence, New York, Norton, 1972.

Section 2 (b)

1. See for example, P.Jensen and T.Payne, Wimber: Friend or Foe?, London, St.Matthias Press, 1990.
2. The Cross, manual, p.68.
3. Wimber does not use the phrase 'born again' often. He prefers the less oblique 'becoming a new person' or 'regeneration', both of which imply power and transformation.
4. Wimber barely focuses on the resurrection of Christ in his works. His interest tends to lie much more in Jesus' raising of others from the dead.

Section 2 (c)

1. Church Growth: State of the Art, pp.215ff.
2. See for example the incident recounted in Power Evangelism, pp.44 ff.
3. Blane Cook, 'Seminar Notes on Physical Healing', Wembley Conference, 1985.
4. For an account of their power and impact, see Mike Flynn, "Come, Holy Spirit", in K. Springer (Ed), Power Encounters, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1988.

Section 2 (d)

1. For example, in talking to some members of the British-based Proclamation Trust, one or two have insisted that a disagreement over the interpretation of a text with its leader, the Revd. Dick Lucas, would be impossible, since he would ultimately be correct in his interpretation. Some of his followers regard his expositionary skills so highly that they can no longer distinguish between the actual text of scripture, and the Revd. Lucas' reading of it. For a fuller account of the dilemma in distinguishing between divine and human agency, see Christoph Schwobel, God: Action and Revelation, Kampen, Pharos Books, 1992, pp.23ff.

CHAPTER SIX

POWER IN THE CHURCH

1. The Church as a Social Body

1.a. Introduction. Church and Church-Planting

In Chapters four and five, we assessed the ideology and then the theology of Wimber. In this Chapter, we shall attempt to grasp Wimber's ecclesiology. As with our previous observations, it will be important to remember that Wimber is a fundamentalist who is essentially positing inductive strategies (social, theological, ideological, etc.), to counter the effects of modermity. Peter Berger points out that there are times when 'an inductive approach ends up with formulations that are hard to distinguish from reductionism'.[1] This partly arises out of practitioners of the inductive strategy 'identifying' the essence of their gospel with some experience or cultural trend within society that 'mirrors' the ideology being offered. One example of this is the American fundamentalist 'New Religious Right' Movement, that argues for a set of Christian values that turn out to be perfectly consonant with the prevailing secular consciousness As we shall see later, Wimber's doctrine of the Church is susceptible to the same faults, not least with its emphasis on the family, 'kinship', power, and, of course, expansion in a 'free market'. However, there is more to the kind of churches that Wimber and his Vineyards envisage than this. In this Chapter we will be attempting to examine how power is deemed to be reified in the life of the body, both in its inner life, and in its witness to the world. We shall also be considering how the Church organises its power a vital task for a study of this type, since effective reification depends on organisation.

Firstly, we must note that Wimber, in common with many charismatic fundamentalists, controls his own network of churches. At present, there are about six hundred 'Vineyards', about half of those being in South America.[2] The remainder are mostly in North America, although there are

Vineyards in Britain, Australia and South Africa In addition to these official Vineyards, there are also a number of 'Vineyard-friendly' churches or groups, that will 'front' or host Vineyard meetings. In Britain for example, the Anglican Bishop David Pytches (St. Andrew, Chorleywood) has close connections with Wimber.[3] Pyches organises a Vineyard-style conference annually ('New Wine'), which attracts thousands of visitors, and Vineyard Pastors address those present. In Oxford, an informal Vineyard 'Kinship Group' exists, run by another Anglican, Teddy Saunders. Beyond the Anglican Church, Wimber enjoys support from modern Restorationist churches such as 'New Frontiers' (Terry Virgo), 'Ichthus' (Roger Forster), as well as more old-fashioned revivalists such as Colin Urquahart. In short, Wimber's support power-base primarily consists of conservative evangelicals who have had some experience of charismatic renewal, or who are Restorationist.[4]

In the early stages of his ministry, Wimber appeared to have little interest in fathering churches· he was content at the time of writing Signs, Wonders and Church Gowth I to let denominations use and adapt his material as they wished for their own ends. Those that deployed his church-growth principles were not required to become Vineyards themselves, nor indeed, to even join a network. Yet this has gradually changed, as Wimber's commitment to a more precise form of power reification has grown stronger Internal struggles within his own churches in the mid-80's forced him to consolidate his grip on them. he now enjoys the status of 'apostolic authority'. From this position of strength, he has begun an intense period of expansion, although he still remains prepared to aid other churches in their efforts to increase numerical growth.[5]

The theological key to this expansion can be found in Wimber's The Kingdom of God (1985) In this volume, he closely approximates the 'Kingdom of God' with the Church, although is careful to ultimately distinguish them. What in effect is presented here, however, is something not unlike British Restorationism. In this school of thought, the Church is the agent of the Kingdom of God, with Kingdom authority and power. The Church must therefore witness to and display all the power and authority of the Kingdom, and function, as of old, apostolically. So, in Wimber's view,

we are to 'invade the Present Age with Age to Come' (KOG, p. 13). There is an inevitable feel of over-realised eschatology in such approaches The present Church becomes synonymous with the power of the Kingdom in an age to come, and apostles seek to adopt a first-century world-view and replicate the kind of signs, wonders and experiences that might have occurred then.

However, the fact that Wimber presses for repetition of the apostolic age so that the Church may become (again) a purer 'power body', only really accounts for how he thinks the Church should witness to the world - its outer life But what of its inner life? Here, the inductive power strategy is much less obvious, as the focus of empowerment shifts from power to intimacy In Church Planting: God's Heart for Expansion I & II, and in The Church in the 90's (1990), the reader/listener is again reminded that an intimate relationship or experience with God will ultimately lead to numerical church growth, and, further still, the founding of new churches, or church-plants These plants will be, by their very nature, expansive, and agents of the same power that brought them to life. (Clegg would see church plants as new nodal-points or agents of power within an expanding circuit). The source of this empowerment as being 'intimacy with the Father' is not without significance. For instance, it echoes our observations on ideology in Chapter Four. And it also points to the structure and augmentation of the Vineyard network, and the problems of conflation, to which we have already referred. Intimacy, unity and obedience to the Father are pointed to as the source of growth, yet it is Wimber himself, father of the Vineyard, and head (apostle) of the 'Kinship Groups' who is the mediator of authority and blessing As we shall see later, the conflation over 'fatherhood' in the Vineyard has implications for the tight 'family' organisation that is present. (As is so common with fundamentalist groups, it is nearly impossible to repudiate the 'father' of the church if you are a member of the family) Given these preliminary observations, we now turn to the more specific details of Wimber's ecclesiology.

1.b. Evangelism in the Church

Peter Berger rightly identifies that part of the core of the inductive strategy is to 'turn to experience as the ground of all religious affirmations' [1] Of course, this can be one's own experience, to whatever extent this is possible, as well as the experiences that are enshrined in a particular history or tradition. In making this observation, Berger is pointing us to a view of induction, where, it is said, religious tradition or history is to be understood as a body of evidence concerning religious experience and the insights derived from those experiences. He goes on to state, however, that the inductive strategy often entails taking 'a deliberately naive attitude' towards accounts of human experiences. this is especially so in more dogmatic (or fundamentalist) communities, where social control and ideology are constructed out of the 'core contents' of these experiences To question the experience would be to raise doubts over the governing conclusions drawn from them This is why the inductive strategy sometimes appears similar to that of the reductive Yet the two are to be distinguished quite sharply The inductive strategy regards modernity as part of its evidence and experience It need neither condemn nor celebrate it, yet it must be detached from it, in order to protect the sanctity, certainty and uniqueness of its own experiences, for the sake of ecclesial identity.

Wimber practices the inductive strategy with regard to evangelism in two distinctive ways an appeal to the (unique) experience of the present, and then to the past In each case, the appeal requires an uncritical 'face-value' reading of the account of the experience. A typical account is described below, illustrating this simple directness.

> In London recently, two young American girls (Vineyard) came upon a Japanese man sitting on a bench They asked him if he knew Jesus When he replied he did not and was a Buddhist, they asked if they could 'pray on him' He said yes so they laid hands on him and asked the Holy Spirit to come upon him He immediately began to weep and they asked, 'Do you feel that?' 'Yes, oh yes,' he replied. 'That's Jesus,' they said. 'Would you like to know him?' He said, 'yes', and was converted Only after he had received the touch of God and responded to him did they tell of the claims of Christ.[2]

Wimber's seminars on evangelism and church-growth are laced with such illustrations. They serve to remind believers that the power of God is immediate, available, effective, and, under the right conditions, reliable Indeed, what Wimber effectively offers through 'power evangelism' is a greater and more life-enhancing experience than the person who is receiving it has previously known: this is the 'proof' of the power and truth of God.[3]

However, effective evangelism need not occur through a dramatic 'power encounter'. If experience is the key to power and empowerment, there will necessarily be a limited range of opportunities for observing and receiving power that are less confrontational One of these contexts, for Wimber, is worship Wimber regards the experience of the Vineyard community at praise and celebration as a 'sign' in its own right.[4] Of course, 'worship' for the Vineyard is more than just praise and celebration it includes many manifestations of power that others may experience prophecy, words of knowledge, and healing, to name but a few Indeed, we can go further here, and state that for Wimber, the evangelistic task of the Church is to allow it to experience the power of God, and respond accordingly For Wimber, evangelism is always more than just preaching or teaching it is the sharing of experience ('the empowered community'), in the hope that others may also share in this, and join the church

However, this stress on the individual and their experience of power belongs to a wider framework church growth In the Introduction to this Chapter, we hinted at the over-realised eschatology present in Wimber's ecclesiology. concerning evangelism, it is most explicit. Wimber believes that the Church of the 1990's will be one of 'unequalled power ... unequalled purity ... the most powerful army on earth during (these) times of divine judgment and revival' [5] In making such appeals of course, Wimber cannot (entirely) draw on the present record of the Church, nor even of the Vineyard Tracing the experience of power in the past becomes vital in shaping the ecclesiology of the future Characteristically, this is done via an uncritical reading of biblical and historical texts [6]

In The Dynamics of Spiritual Growth (1990 209), works of power such as the healing of a cripple are specifically linked to numerical church-growth. This strategy is practised elsewhere by Wimber (PH, PE, SWCG I & II etc.), in the wider interests of demonstrating that evangelism, even in the early Church, was a matter of reifying and demonstrating God's power, and non-believers experiencing it for themselves. Naturally, there are many problems with reading historical texts in this way. Harnack, for example, a different kind of exponent of the inductive strategy (according to Berger), reckoned that such experiences of power were 'inner' manifestations, subjective confirmations of an insight into an encounter with the truth [7] Wimber however, reads the acts of God, both in past and present, entirely in terms of experiences of power that might give rise to effective evangelism, and, later, church-growth. Thus, the task of the Church as a social body is to be an expanding or self-multiplying agent of God's power, in order that non-believers might experience for themselves the certainty of God.

1.c. 'Affirming the Body'. Signs and Wonders in the Vineyard

The question of how power is reified in the life of the Church, both in its inner life and its witness to the world, is answered definitively by Wimber in most of his works via the manifestation of signs and wonders Signs and wonders are miracles or particular demonstrations of God's power, which, according to Wimber, result in people being evangelised or converted, or drawn into a deeper relationship with the Father. We have already noted the evangelistic potential that Wimber ascribes to such phenemena. But what is their eccesial function, even if no numerical growth takes place as a result of their occurrence, just as at, for example, a Vineyard Conference? Three possibilities are suggested here, each of them pointing to the power-based identity of Wimber's churches.

Firstly, miracles, or rather, stories of miracles, have a rhetorical function. They inspire fear and hope, identify enemies and friends, set

boundaries for groups, and help sustain congregational momentum Wimber's anecdotes about healings and deliverance play a crucial part in affirming the body of believers We are not primarily concerned in this thesis with investigating whether or not these miracles really happen. We are, however, concerned with their significance for individuals and groups who are claiming to have witnessed them. In the case of Wimber, the stories or testimonies are always designed to underline the powerful dynamism of God that is prosecuted so forcefully in fundamentalist and revivalist groups.

In many respects, the stories mirror modern 'urban myths'. Second, third or fourth-hand testimony that cannot actually be verified, yet fits into an existing plausibility structure, and perhaps even expands it slightly, confirms latent suspicions and hopes in individuals and groups. The stories enable discussion of phenomena that might hitherto have been supressesed through fear or ignorance To convey hope, examples I have personally encountered from some Wimber followers include the following· a man healed of A I.D S., a genetic deformity 'wiped away'; miraculous feedings, dental cavities filled by 'the hand of God', and eyeball, leg and hand replacement, where none existed before. To warn, or instil a degree of fear, there are a host of other 'myths' surrounding demons. Blane Cook claims to have been 'slimed' by one (i.e., attacked, as depicted in the film Ghostbusters), Bill Surbitzky (not a colleague of Wimber's, but a 'Signs and Wonders' exponent nonetheless) claims that wives who engage in oral sex can become demonised, some Vineyard members claim to have 'seen' demons, in a variety of poses. As every child knows, a myth is a story that is not true on the outside, but true on the inside. The healing stories/myths propogated by Wimber are not meant to be scrutinised to see if they really happened They are intended instead, to affirm and expand existing horizons of belief, as well as point to the possibility of an omnipotent-interventionist power beyond them. They are intended to communicate that God is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask for.

Secondly, signs and wonders convey assurance of the presence of God to believers The use of the word 'assurance' here is no accident. To

understand the function of signs and wonders within the Vineyard network, it is necessary to have some grasp of the Doctrine of Assurance. Beginning with the Evangelical Revivals of the nineteenth century (Wesley, Whitfield, et al), the doctrine of assurance has always been at the forefront of 'experimental' (i.e , experiential) Christianity. What is essentially at issue here is assurance of salvation, both for the individual and the particular church. Calvin, for example, taught that membership of the elect, manifested by the evidence of a godly life, gave an objective and inalienable assurance of God's eternal favour However, Wesley was later to reject the predestinarian roots of this doctrine, and proposed instead that assurance for the believer(s) came from 'the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God' (Rom. 8 : 6).' In turn, any claim to this testimony had to be tested by identifying various scriptural 'marks', such as manifestation of the fruit or gifts of the Holy Spirit

We do not have the space here to discuss the history and development of the doctrine of assurance However, we must note that it does not feature prominently in modern Methodist teaching, in the way that it featured in Wesley's theology. Pentecostal groups and fundamentalist Protestants however, all have some kind of doctrine of assurance. Quite simply, it is as necessary as the hallmark that identifies a precious metal The doctrine of assurance identifies true believers, and reassures them of the presence and favour of God. For Wimber, signs, wonders and healings operate functionally in this manner. the social body that fails to reify the power of the Spirit is 'out of the will of God'. The church that manifests the fruit and gifts of the Spirit however, is self-assured of God's immediate presence with them. Thus, signs and wonders assure the body that they have a distinct identity that sets them apart from the world, as the community of the redeemed.[2]

Thirdly, signs and wonders function mechanistically, within a mechanistic system. The use of the word 'mechanism' here is intended to indicate that Wimber's concerns for the Church primarily lie in areas connected with its effectiveness and efficiency Wimber, steeped in the 'church growth tradition' of Donald McGavran and Peter Wagner, regards the

church as the agent that must effectively fulfill the (so called) Great Commission. to make disciples of all nations Within church growth thinking, there is a variety of opinion as to how this is to be done, ranging from 'programme evangelism', 'Tele-evangelism', through to Wimber's own distinctive neo-Pentecostal emphasis. Yet the common thread that unites the church growth thinkers is a mechanistic approach to fundaments. James Hopewell has summarised this approach to ecclesiology most admirably:

> Mechanist approaches focus on program effectiveness .... Churches that are growing in size both signify and accomplish the work of the Lord . "Bigness" is, moreover, a "powerful evangelistic tool" and provides the resources necessary for effective programs of worship and ministry [3]

Wimber, in common with other church growth thinkers, sees the Church as little more than a mechanism or agent (with a stress on efficiency), as it attempts to do the work of God In Wimber's case, there is a direct connection here between his Christology and ecclesiology of central interest is the works of either Christ or the church, and their capacity to convert individuals, leading to church growth Wimber's rhetoric is often packed with mechanistic words, that 'power' many of his sermons or talks· 'tools', 'effective', 'priority', 'mobilise' and 'control' are common in usage In short, the stress on mechanism is a natural and necessary development if power-related fundaments are forming the basis of an ecclesial body Mechanistic approaches to the church ensure that power is received, distributed and held both economically and effectively. In the inductive power circuit, efficient mechanisms are vital for transferring and reifying power. Such mechanisms might be a prayer methodology, an evangelistic technique, or a 'key insight'. If power is not reified, mechanisms can be checked, altered or discarded, in favour of more efficient ones. Naturally of course, this can lead to pragmatism becomming consecrated, possibly leading to a slide into morphological fundamentalism Indeed, within the inductive power circuit, this trend is virtually unavoidable This can be traced historically in Wimber's theological emphasis. Since the early 1980's, his search for efficient forms of belief that reify power most effectively has taken him from signs and wonders to healing, then to worship, then to prophecy, and finally to eschatology and

holiness.[4] Yet in each phase of emphasis, the stress on signs and wonders within the church has been primarily twofold. Firstly, to assure believers of the presence of God, and, secondly, to ensure the effective and efficient reification of God's power, that will lead to growth of the same.[5] There is a sense then, in which the mechanistic approach to the church and to signs and wonders simply treats them as agents or as rather vacuous channels for God's power Whilst this is partly true, these agents also have a role as transformers: converting the original power into something effective and appropriate for growth. However, given the virtually limitless ideas on what is deemed effective or appropriate, how can a power-based ecclesial community maintain an identity? As we shall now see in the next section, the control of human agents depends on the further use of mechanisms, namely an appeal to the dynamics of fear, obedience and purity.

1 d Fear, Obedience and Purity. Power in the Church

We have already suggested that Wimber's ecclesiology suffers from what some would call an 'over-realised eschatology' That is, an inordinately high stress on the power, rule and reign of God in the present, at the expense of valuing the freedom and respect that God gives to all creatures. Wimber's over-realised eschatology touches many aspects of his thinking, but can be most easily traced in his teaching on healing. Wimber stands within a fundamentalist Pentecostal tradition that speaks easily of the dead being raised, teeth being filled (creation ex nihilo), bones being reformed or growing anew, and eye-balls reforming in their sockets, where once there had been nothing ' For Wimber, such events are 'indicators' that the Kingdom of God, in the form of the 'Third Wave', has arrived with greater force now than since the time of the Apostles. We cannot devote space in this thesis to examining such testimonies as truth-claims, although personally, I think the stories have a rhetorical function (i e., persuasive) in Wimber's gatherings, and are very probably exaggerations or 'hearsay', and in some cases, mistakes [2]

Yet the stories themselves also have a deeper purpose that is common to many fundamentalist groups. Fundamentalists are at odds with the

pressures of modernity and plurality, and are actively engaged in the work of persuading non-believers to become disciples. Fundamentalists distrust 'the world', and fear its malign influence on their order. Thus, evangelism that is inductively based may point non-believers to the (alternative) power of God, but there is also a second way in which a fundamentalist inductive strategy can operate, namely, to point to the non-believer's experience of the world as grounds for fear and trembling. Again, the 'core-experiences' of the world's problems need to be grasped, and only then can openness to an alternative power structure begin (A good example of this within the Vineyard would be the treatment offered to A I.D.S. patients)[3] Stirring up fear about the events in the world, cultural trends and alternative ontologies in society is standard fundamentalist practice, and, according to Caplan, Gerlach, Hines and others, it affects the community of believers in at least three ways [4]

Firstly, it binds the community together against the world, in a tighter type of relationship than before If 'gaps' appear in the 'defences', the community will risk disintegration, so personal freedom and differences of opinion are often compromised for the sake of defensive unity at such times Secondly, the existing hierarchy of leadership and fundaments are often re-stated with greater force, so that there is a pattern of order for resisting the threat. Thirdly, and consequently, the ecclesial identity of the community often becomes concretised. In Wimber's case, this often takes the form of resorting to 'family-type' metaphors, which appear to offer the best hope of protecting fundaments vested in hierarchy and intimacy

If fear of the world forms part of the basis for ecclesial identity, an equally strong ingredient is that of the necessity of obedience. In the case of the Vineyard, again with respect to over-realised eschatology, this has taken a remarkable form. In 1989, Wimber met with a North American called Paul Cain, who claimed to be a prophet. He brought with him some associates from a church in Kansas, and the group subsequently became known as the 'Kansas Six'. Cain, a former associate of the (discredited) William Branham,[5] claimed that God was restoring prophetic gifts to the Church on a par with Old Testament prophecy to prove this, he is alleged to have

predicted the Armenian earthquake, which was a sign to (John Wimber) that (Paul Cain) was from God [6] Cain was convinced that God had called the 'Kansas Six' to work with the Vineyard, and they subsequently submitted to Wimber's apostolic authority.[7]

Cain left the Vineyard in late 1991, and with Bob Jones, another of the prophets dismissed for sexual impropriety, at around the same time, the 'Kansas Six' no longer enjoy the same status they once had. In spite of the brief sojourn of the 'Kansas Six' at the Vineyard, their presence there is illustrative of how power-related phenomena induce obedience amongst fellow believers Cain implicitly claimed to be a new breed of disciple. He referred to the Apostle Paul as his 'great predecessor', implied that he was the product of a miraculous conception, and that he was free from any sexual desires (i e , a pure 'channel' for reifying God's power).[8] Early on in his ministry with Wimber, he suggested that God would create a new breed of children - an 'elected seed generation' - who would be more empowered in the work of the Spirit than ever before His ministry seems to have had an extraordinary impact on the Vineyard, and beyond British church leaders symathetic to Wimber attended a conference on prophecy at Holy Trinity, Brompton, in 1990 After listening to Cain, and weighing his prophecy and words of knowledge, they signed a statement affirming his ministry, and the authority of the prophets [9] All this prophetic activity occurred at a significant time for Wimber. Vineyard pastors were divided, amongst other things, on the issue of planting churches in Britain, and Wimber's authority over the whole Vineyard network was being questioned by some The prophets, having submitted to Wimber (with their words and works of power), went some way to restoring that authority

This was in part achieved by Cain's own ministry and teaching Like Wimber, Cain appeared to be able to publicly give out words of knowledge (personal details about illness, secret sins, etc.), with remarkable accuracy. He also prophesied that revival would break out in Britain (in 1991)[10], and that the Vineyard would be an instrument of 'great blessing' In his teaching, he re-introduced the Annanias and Sapphira 'syndrome', which encouraged unwavering obedience to Wimber and himself In one recording, he explicitly states that those who judge, criticise or oppose

either himself or Wimber would be opening themselves to 'a lot of judgement and the severity of God'· their families and friends may also be affected, and those who consistently oppose the prophetic will be 'taken by God' (i.e., die).'[11] Wimber himself endorsed this type of teaching, and in his comments on Cain, impresses on the audience the need for intimacy with God to be connected to obedience. for Wimber, part of the function of Cain's signs and wonders was to engender a greater degree of acquiescence amongst Vineyard members

The introduction of the 'Kansas Six' at this point in our argument helps us to understand a third dynamic at work in the empowered church. Fear and obedience - either of God or those agents who represent him - often leads to an emphasis on holiness 'Holiness' is meant here in the way that the concept is deployed in fundamentalist and revival movements. It is generally a withdrawal from 'the world', and focusses on personal morality, especially sexual, as the best means for countering spiritual ineffectiveness Thus, Paul Cain's alleged sexual purity - probably a cause for deep suspicion in any other context - is lauded by some Vineyard members. Equally, the sexual failings of Vineyard Pastors cannot be tolerated, and usually result in apostolic or prophetic powers being stripped.'[12]

The stress on holiness as an emerging trend within the Vineyard need not surprise us Many revival movements find a move towards bodily and spiritual purity unavoidable It is ironic that movements that often begin by 'embodying' joy, celebration and love in community life, end up finishing with disembodiment and legalism in short a move from experiential fundaments to propositional fundamentalism Some 'House Churches' in the British Restoration Movement can be seen to have done this, even in their brief history The reasons for this are manifold, but are connected at a deep level to the community's need to preserve the purity of their power. This necessarily involves exorcising any impurities in agents or channels of God's power, as a means of preventing distortion or power failure A stress on purity also enables a mechanistically orientated ecclesial body to 'evolve', in the full Darwinian sense. If the church is to be a powerful body, and therefore pure, there is little room

for the weak, or for those who cannot reach certain 'standards' of spirituality. True, they can be ministered to in the body, but they are unlikely to feel equal to or as valued as those who can reify God's power in their lives

Thus, we can conclude that Wimber's ecclesiology mirrors his theology. The Church is to be a power-body, an agent, like Jesus, who reified God's power. Entry or initiation into the church is via an experiential power-encounter, and continuation in the Christian life is being affirmed in the body by more signs and wonders. Such phenomena connote assurance of salvation to the believer, and also confirm the validity (certainty) of the mechanisms that are able to best reify the power of God In turn, a believer is induced to remain within this fundamentalism by a complex form of socialisation Fear of the world and its alienating properties are exposed, and the haven of a 'family' and a 'Father' offered as an alternative. This 'family' has power to deal with the malign forces at work in the world, but power can only be truly assessed by individual believers if they are obedient to the (godly) structured hierarchy of truths and leaders, and, live pure lives that are free from properties that might distort of interrupt the flow of power. Much of this thinking proceeds from an over-realised eschatology, arising out of Wimber's emphasis on the Kingdom of God So, power to some extent resides in what Clegg would call 'the imagined community', rather than the real Given these remarks, we must now take a more analytical look at the social augmentation operating in the Vineyard network

2. Reflections on Authority

2.a Authority, Structure and Stewardship

From a sociological perspective, 'the phenomenon of authority is basic to human behaviour.'[1] We have already noted in the brief Sections above that power can be held in a community by a variety of different means. A stress on fear, obedience, holiness or 'family' places a variety of power structures in the ecclesial community. In turn, the (hierarchical) theology and ideology of the community impacts that structure, and vice versa, such that it is proper to speak of these factors being, at times, richly interrelated. Of course, part of what keeps a power structure in place is the exercise of authority, which must be one that is appropriate to the overall power complex.

In an investigation of this kind, we can only really 'see' power where it is used - it is not 'lying around in piles somewhere to be observed'.[2] As we assess Wimber's churches here, we must remember that it is the use of power that is of interest here, and not so much the substance or source of power. For example, money is a power base or resource, but until it is put to use in some way, it is not actually a power in itself.[3] More pertinently, if we consider the gifts of the Spirit as power resources (as Wimber does), it is the stewardship of such gifts that is the focus of our ecclesiological interest. In other words, the use of, presiding over, or charge of 'power-bases' (e.g. prophecy), will tell us something about the shape of a particular community. Is power used for personal gain, or for the good of those beyond the community? Are 'gifts' exercised publicly or privately, and for what ends?

Equally, within organisations such as churches, it is not the occasional or incidental use of power which is crucial, but its structured use. In fact, the structure of power is a major form of stewardship itself, since how we use power may be largely determined by its structure. Thus, where there is regularly patterned activity, whether intended or not, we can see structure. As one commentary suggests,

> All social systems, including organisations, consist of the patterned activities of a number of individuals Moreover these patterned activities are complementary or interdependent with respect to some common output or outcome, they are repeated, relatively enduring and bounded in space and time [4]

If we think, for the moment, of power as analogous to physical energy, we can think of organisational structures as the ways we channel, focus, impede, transform, store and transport power, structure makes power useful or at least more predictable in its effects Such a view of power certainly 'fits' Wimber's mechanistic approach to power: an inquiry into the structures that channel power will certainly inform our understanding of the nature of that power being served. The question is, can this view really complement our study?

It is important to note that structure itself is a power resource[5], indeed, organisational structure can determine (to a great extent) not only the activities of individuals within the institution but also the overall effectiveness of the system in accomplishing its purpose. Put in ecclesiological terms, structure is a gift of/to the church, enabling it to be a formed and distinctive community. the organisation itself is a power resource Of course, like all gifts or resources 'given' to the Church, examples of good and bad use abound But in fundamentalist communities, there is a particular interest in the formation of communities whose immediate directionality lies in perfectedness, dynamic empowerment, or measurable effectiveness Clearly, any appeal to ideological or theological essentials by fundamentalists must be supported by 'proof'. Usually this is a community of faith (numerical size need not be an issue), who can demonstrate that the essentials themselves do at least two things Firstly, they must reflect a vision of God, secondly, they must be shown to 'work' in the world, if practised As far as our case-study is concerned, three further points need noting

Firstly, Wimber's churches are to some extent 'imagined communities' (Clegg). That is to say, the stress placed on structure has its origins in what Wimber supposes the Kingdom of God should be like ([KDG, p. 37, etc.]. This often materialises in the more immediate form of over-realised

eschatology the expectation that there is no limit at all to what God can do. So, the Church is expected to 'mirror' a state of affairs that has only ever existed hypothetically. As we noted in an earlier Chapter, part of the problem for the inductive strategy is that it produces an ecclesiology that can sometimes amount to little more than 'a backward looking legitimation for present practice'. This is certainly so in the case of Wimber's Vineyards But what is so often looked back to is not what the First Century was actually like, but what it should or could have been like. Thus, just as the community of the past is imagined, so the present structure of the community is constructed around inductive imagination

Secondly, a stress on 'kinship' in the Vineyard network implies a structure of intimacy. In our Chapter on ideology, we noted how love as a source of power was appealed to in Vineyard worship In the Vineyard churches themselves, this in inculcated by a structure that fosters closeness and 'ideal' family ties Wimber's 'fathering' role in the church is often conflated - in rhetoric, analogy and theology - with that of the Fatherhood of God, such that the quality of being 'child-like' is more valued than, say, the more mutual term 'brother' or 'sister'. We shall return to the use of the metaphor 'family' as a structural device shortly.

Thirdly, Vineyards are also structured for growth. Their historical and ecclesiological roots lie firmly in the 'Church Growth' tradition, which insists that the community of faith must be built around formulae or structures that directly result in the numerical growth of the congregation. This necessarily means that the stewardship of gifts, including the gift of structure, are subjected to the wider goal of reifying power in the life of the community, with that power itself being both an initial 'sign' of growth, and an agent for further increase of the same

2.b. Structure as an Expression of Value

The sociological perspectives we have so far explored in this Chapter now enable us to return to some of the theological issues at stake If we are correct in our identification of Wimber's value commitments, and accurate in describing how they are organised, we must now ask a further critical question· what is it that structures structure? The answer, in part, has already been hinted at: ideology or theology provide the core outline for ecclesial structure. The fundamental value commitments - power, intimacy, mechanism, the Kingdom - make Wimber's way of doing things not only right, but even natural In short, they are the best ontology, or, perhaps even the only one. Clegg calls this 'the hegemony of the ideological framework which enables and justifies these structures' ' It is important to note however, that this is often not an overt commitment - indeed it may contradict overt commitments and still operate powerfully, when the fundamental assumptions are shared without being articulated To those outside a fundamentalist community of faith, such structure may look like a conspiracy or a deceit (e g , keeping women out of leadership, and encouraging female submission in the context of marriage). But to those inside the community, this way of doing things seems natural, desirable and godly

Clearly however, the most effective way of assessing values and structure is by analysing what outcomes are produced by a particular body. If we consider all the products of a system, we can see how the structure is itself a conveyor of values in this positive sense. A chemical works may produce a selection of marketable products, employ many people gainfully, and make a profit for its shareholders, it may thus achieve its stated aims, and be evaluated as a good company. However, any systematic analysis would also have to point out other things that might be produced by the company. Perhaps redundancies were enforced to protect profits, harmful chemicals released into the environment as 'by-products', or there are few safety or recreational facilities for employees. These observations might reveal another value system in operation· a negligent

attitude to workers perhaps, or excessive pursuit of profit at the expense of safety or environmental considerations.

In citing the example above, we are not trying to imply that the Church is to be compared to a production line (Although mechanist/church-growth approaches to ecclesiology are very exposed to this comparison) What is being suggested however, is that fundamentalists are usually very clear about what their value commitments are. It might simply begin by being a defence of biblical inerrancy, gravitating to the more complex agenda of Wimber's Vineyard network. yet whatever the fundaments are, they form the basis for structure Paul Harrison, in his classic study of the American Baptist Convention, states that 'polity is the sociological manifestation of doctrinal belief, it is the political expression of the content of the gospel as interpreted by the members of the religious group '[2] How though, do we 'read' organisational structure as value statement, in order to grasp Wimber's ecclesiology? A first step is to differentiate between types of power at work although we must acknowledge that they are in fact, completely interrelated forming a kind of social 'web'

The first one to consider is that of jurisdiction - the capacity to make 'law' that is binding on all parts or members of a system. Jurisdiction includes elements of constraint, since the expected response to law is obedience However, it is always a mistake to assume that jurisdictional power can be equated with brute force. Even in fundamentalist communities, such a force is generally unnecessary. Jurisdictional power enshrines shared values or fundaments, and establishes them in a hierarchical relationship with their subjects. Thus, jurisdictional power is 'legitimate authority', and what legitimates it is the value system as a whole [3] From this position, custodians of this power can be established, who can then ensure that laws or fundaments are universally binding.

Related to jurisdictional power is the power of consent or reception. 'Reception' is the consent of the governed, without which a governable community is unfeasible Most commonly, the base or resource for this type

of power is the group's sense of solidarity [4] In Wimber's case, this sense of solidarity and identity is achieved by the establishment of common goals and shared fundaments, but also, at a deeper level, by appealing to believers as a 'family' A constant theological and ideological appeal to fatherhood of God, coupled with establishing believers as his chosen children, bind the community of faith together as a special family, favoured by God. Coupled with this, we must acknowledge the very real dynamic of Wimber conflating his own 'fatherhood' of the Vineyard with that of God's Rhetorical anecdotes about ideal families, especially fathers and grandfathers, are frequently used by Wimber in theological illustration (As an observer at Wimber conferences, I have sometimes wondered if Wimber sees his own attitude to his grandchildren as anything different from God's attitude to humanity) Thus, the power of consent becomes doubly important, since it confers status on leader and led alike, yet within a sharply defined ideological context

A third kind of structured power is that of 'orders', a word familiar in theological and sociological contexts 'Orders' are sub-groups that have differing functions and values For example, prophets, evangelists and teachers might all wield power within a given community, each offering expertise or specialised knowledge to others. 'Orders' help resource the power base, and can also be responsible for specific areas of jurisdictional power Consequently, the 'orders' of a given community often indicate the kind of power interests a group might have Priests and Bishops may be fine for the Church of England, but fundamentalist groups, such as we are studying, are more interested in offices or 'orders' where there is 'anointing' with power, such as prophets, apostles, exorcists or evangelists

Related to the above is a fourth type of power that can be termed 'competent' Wrong identifies this with authority Competent authority can be established by knowledge This can be knowledge of strategies (how to grow a Church), mysteries (spiritual warfare), or of people (words of knowledge) Competent power is grounded in the ability of the leader to demonstrate authority or expertise with particular areas of inquiry, which the community has a mutual interest in

Lastly, there is idiosyncratic power. Often this is called charisma, charm or leadership ability. (Wrong calls this type of power 'personal authority') [6] This type of power within the structure of fundamentalism must never be underestimated Frequently, the 'force' of the jurisdictional power may depend deeply on the charisma of the leader who is custodian of the fundaments. As an expression of value, the structuredness of idiosyncratic power is a vital element in fundamentalist communities. Perhaps its principal function is to provide a type of 'spirit', style or character that supports and encourages the group's tenacious pursuit of its goals

The focus on these five types of power as forms of structure necessarily points to the phenomena that are valued by fundamentalist groups like Wimber's The Vineyard organises its power around those goals and objects that are valued by members, such that the structure reflects the values, and the values reflect structures For ecclesial communities, there is no escape from such narcissism. For example, if hierarchy is an ideological focus, it will inevitably pass through the theology of a community into its very ecclesiology Exactly the same will be true for an emphasis on 'words', 'works', 'sacraments' or 'tradition'. In each case, the community of faith will be required to reflect and protect the values it upholds, and, generally, attempt to export them Thus, we can say that the only way of securing a sound ecclesial polity is to begin with a good theology or ideology Therefore, it is not unfair to suggest that fundamentalist communities, and in particular our case-study, will always attract criticism for their ecclesial practice at a variety of levels, in direct proportion to the criticisms levelled at their theology and ideology Clearly, 'power' is a vital 'key' in unlocking aspects of ecclesiological theory and practice From this position, we will now turn to overall power network that operates in our case-study

2 c Reticulation and Power

In the language of sociology, something that is reticulate describes movements, communities or ideas that are web-like, resembling a network ' In this thesis, we have chosen to work with the 'power network' concept in describing fundamentalist belief and activity, in the belief that fundamentalism is an organisation in which cells or nodes are tied together, not necessarity through one central point, but, rather, through intersecting sets of personal relationships, group dynamics and ideological factors It is now our task to show how Wimber's churches are socially augmented (i e , a reticulate macrostructure) This will necessarily involve articulating the linkages between the personal and the organisational, ties of various types (ideological, eschatalogical, etc), at different levels of social organisation

The first factor in social augmentation to consider is the personal ties made between members In the Vineyard network this is formally structured through 'Kinship Groups' (to which we have already referred), and in Vineyard-friendly churches, the same end is achieved through 'Home Groups' or 'Cell Groups'. These groups tend to meet weekly in the home of a member, with group size usually limited to around twelve people, in order to encourage intimacy, close support and mutual accountability. There is usually a leader of the group, who will be an appointee of the more senior leaders A typical Vineyard 'Kinship Group' will meet in an evening for about three hours Prayer, praise, exercising the gifts of the Spirit and teaching generally occupy this time, although the group will be encouraged to develop a 'family feel' by adopting a broader range of activities that lead to a deep level of bonding at social and interpersonal levels

A second factor in reticulation are the links forged between leaders In all fundamentalist groups, personal, theological and directional unity amongst the leadership is vital any significant diversity would weaken the power network and threaten to 'devalue' the place of the fundaments Wimber and his churches are no exception to this rule Even a cursory glance at Vineyard history shows that theological diversity cannot really

be tolerated, over the years, a number of leaders have left the Vineyard or been forced to abdicate leadership responsibility [3] The key to maintaining a leadership group, be it apostolic or prophetic, is to ensure that all the leaders are closely bonded together personally (thus providing a model for kinship), and then again ideologically, so the power of the fundaments and the unity they bring is reinforced The greatest threat to a reticulate body is loss of control, which will result in loss of power. Control and power are thus maintained by limiting the range and scope of theological and experiental diversity at work within the group.

A third factor to consider is that of ritual activity In Wimber's case, ritual activity is most obviously encountered through the agency of revival and revivalism The stress placed by Wimber on the power of revival is a ritualistic method for social augmentation Revivals (sometimes called 'Celebrations' or 'Conferences') emphasize movement unity they promote religious fervour and intensify commitment Less obviously, they serve to report individual and group triumphs and trials (prayer 'victories' or requests), and communicate ideological refinements. Revivals strengthen movement unity by powerful dramatisation intense group prayer for individuals, enthusiastic singing and built-up expectations all play their part.[4]

A fourth factor in reticulation is organised federalism How can the members of a relatively exclusive fundamentalist group be sure they are believing and behaving in a appropriate manner? Answer by a limited form of external validation that is sympathetic to the group. Typically, this takes the form of a fundamentalist group being linked, yet remaining distinct from, other like-minded groups or individuals On an individual level in this respect, Wimber's use of established figures from the world of North American revivalism is especially significant. For Wimber, the services of men like Leonard Ravenhill, Mike Bickle, Paul Cain and Jack Deere inculcate the credibility of Vineyard fundaments to their members, as well as providing a support network for revivalists which could be classed as a loose federation At a group level, the Vineyard churches may also link themselves to other churches, not just individuals. In Britain for

example, the Vineyard is supported by a network or federation of sympathetic churches, ranging from Restorationist to Anglican.[5]

A final factor to be mentioned is that of ideological linkage. Vineyard ideology is communicated through narrative, books, tapes and conferences, which serve individuals and groups. The ideology undergirds the Vineyard's ability both to control its diversity and to ensure its unity it is the power of Wimber's appealing ideology that binds groups together that are organisationally disparate. Even in a highly dispersed network like the Vineyard, it is vital that there is a form of unifying 'centralism' At the heart of that centralism is control itself, which is achieved through a common ideology. That ideology is the key to the infrastructure of the movement, and allows fundaments to be maintained in the face of diversity and plurality In Britain for example, Anglicans, Baptists and Restorationists may agree to differ about organisational factors, yet have a considerable measure of spiritual and ideological unity, because they are 'Wimberites' or have been 'Wimberised'. It is core beliefs that provide the solid basis for unity, and any consideration of ecclesial polity cannot afford to ignore this.

The five factors mentioned in connection with reticulation and power are clearly not exhaustive However, their mention does demonstrate that social augmentation in Wimber's churches and those churches that apply his principles is a complex affair, not reducible to one single factor Ideology is perhaps most crucial, yet it is nevertheless only one factor amongst many that enables the reticulate power structure of Wimber's churches What though, if anything, is at the centre of the reticulate power structure we have described? The answer would have to be <u>control</u> The nature of that control must ensure a common language is spoken, and common narratives shared, even amongst a highly dispersed group like the Vineyard Control remains vital, and it is held by the leadership, who guard the principal fundaments, and interpret them for the believers. Only when control is certain, can power be communicated, mediated and distributed, control enables the network to thrive, and restore itself when damaged (More will be said about this in the conclusion.) In the

evaluation that follows, we can now make some observations about the place of power in fundamentalist churches

2.d. Evaluation

A fundamentalist movement is neither an amorphous collectivity nor a highly centralised autocracy. It cannot be considered an imperfect bureaucracy either, which succeeds because of ideological unity. Fundamentalist movements are best understood within the contexts of power and network they tend to be decentralised, sectarian and reticulate in structure. The leadership of fundamentalist churches tends to be charismatic rather than bureaucratic in nature The personal commitment that is so often characteristic of believers is dependent on mutual, communicable and exchangeable or transferable charisma, such that effective leadership is not irrevocably tied to certain individuals In Wimber's case, a steady turnover of leaders may actually enhance social augmentation rather than destabilise it, although Wimber necessarily remains the common personal and ideological link for Vineyard members

The sectarian character of fundamentalist groups like the Vineyard occurs for a variety of reasons ' It is partly funded by the ideology of personal access to power, which leads to what we might call a federal stress on individualism This sounds like a contradiction in terms, but in fundamentalist ecclesiology this is an accurate description of the state of affairs The 'church' is a collection of people who are individually saved, individually sanctified and individually blessed personal testimony and the validity of one's own experiences of God are highly prized in such communities Any 'catholic' notions of corporate endeavour or experience are generally very secondary. It is under these conditions that segmentation and hierarchy thrive, since personal and ideological differences will always threaten the fragile unity that a fundamentalist group might enjoy

The various segments of any fundamentalist group are linked into one reticulate structure by factors that produce bonding and unity. These might involve the fostering of close personal ties between members

(kinship), refining ideological fundaments, or validating the network by referring to a federation of like-minded groups. Such a structure is capable of a high degree of adaptiveness, which is at least in part the genius of fundamentalism in contemporary society. Fundamentalism is not easily suppressed, and its non-dialogical nature means that it can often penetrate different socio-economic and cultural groups without (initially) being compromised. This in itself is achieved by an emphasis on ideological, theological and ecclesiological unity, which is seen as the best means of receiving, holding and exporting the power of God. The ecclesiological enemy for fundamentalists is therefore diversity, which parallels its ideological and theological enemies: plurality and liberalism Social augmentation in Wimber's churches is thus based soundly on 'bonding' the believer, either to a notion of unity, to ideology, or to a leader This bonding, so typical of fundamentalist groups, requires 'the peremptory dismissal of contra-indicative evidence or conflicting standpoints', but, in our view, only 'becomes comprehensible when the restrictive, artificially contained character of the ... [fundaments] is analysed in the structural context of the hermeneutics of power.[2]

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

Section 1 (a)

1. P. Berger, The Heretical Imperative, p.140.
2. See Equipping the Saints, vol.5., no.3., Summer 1991.
3. David Pytches and his colleagues at St.Andrew's, Chorleywood, have 'planted' Vineyard-style churches at various locations in England. Describing them as Independent Anglican Fellowships (or 'Anglican-friendly'), they remain linked to St.Andrew's, rather than being under the control of the Diocesan Bishop or affiliated to the existing parish structures in which they operate. A 'plant' in Watford, Hertfordshire, currently meets in the parish of Christ Church, but works and worships in relation to St.Andrew's. For a fuller explanation of how Pytches believes this might work in the future, see D. Pytches & B. Skinner, New Wineskins, Guildford, Eagle Press, 1991.
4. For example, the list of supporters in Britain who affirmed Wimber and the 'Kansas Six' included David Pytches, Terry Virgo, Roger Forster, Graham Cray (presently Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge), Sandy Millar and David MacInnes. See The Church of England Newspaper, Friday, July 27, 1990.
5. David Pytches, former Bishop of Chile and now Vicar of St.Andrew's, Chorleywood, was almost certainly invited by Wimber to leave the Anglican Church and head up the UK Vineyard network. (In a recent interview, Wimber claimed this 'rumour' was absurd, but then added that an offer might have been made in jest: David Gibb, Interview, unpublished, 10/09/92). Whatever the truth was, Pytches has made no move, but, continues to remain an important focus for UK Vineyard activity. Wimber's problem in controlling his USA Vineyard's began, ironically, after he was seriously ill with an angina attack. Wimber was advised that he should not continue as Pastor of the Vineyard. So he (allegedly) handed over the pastorship to Sam and Gloria Thompson. However, Wimber recovered quickly, and then demanded his former position back. Further splits amongst Vineyard Pastors followed, specifically over the status of Wimber's authority, and also over the issue of planting Vineyards in the UK. Some pastors opposed this, whilst others supported the move. In 1988, the Revd. Chris Lane, Curate at St.Andrew's, Chorleywood, left the Anglican Church to begin a Vineyard in St.Albans.

Section 1 (b)

1. P. Berger, The Heretical Imperative, p.62.
2. SWCG I, manual, section 1, p.10.
3. This echoes the type of claim made by 'Jesus People' in the 1960's, namely that "Jesus is the greatest 'high'". In SWCG I, manual, section 1, p.11ff, for example, we are told that the experience of drugs, alcohol or sex does not compare with the 'kick' one gets from the Spirit.
4. See Worship Conference, 1989, with Graham Kendrick and Terry Virgo.

5. John Wimber, The Church in the 90's, 1990, Anaheim, Mercy Publishing, essay by Paul Cain, pp.19ff.
6. Commenting on the growth of the early church as described in Acts, C.P. Wagner states that: 'While Christianity was being presented to unbelievers in both word and deed, it was the deed that far exceeded the word in evangelistic effectiveness'. (The Third Wave, p.79). Wimber makes the same point in Power Evangelism, p.45.
7. A. Harnack, What is Christianity?, Augsburg, Fortress Press, 1986 edition, p.28.

Section 1 (c)

1. J. Wesley, Standard Sermons, p.208.
2. Of course, that which is deemed to guarantee assurance need not be experiential. The fundament could be knowledge, for example - 'knowing' you are saved, say via a particular atonement theory.
3. See J. Hopewell, Congregation, p.24.
4. Hopewell is surely right here when he describes this kind of mechanistic fundamentalism as 'consecrated pragmatism'. Writing in Christian Life ("Zip to 3,000 in 5 Years", October 1982:20), Wimber notes that, 'Dr.Donald McGavran...inspired in me a fierce pragmatism'. Wimber is constantly looking for methods or forms that will reify power and demonstrate efficiency. Anything that does not appear to do this in theology or ecclesiology seems to receive scant attention from the Vineyard and other church growth schools.
5. For a slightly different perspective, see the discussion on 'power complex' in James Cobble, The Church and the Powers, Hendrickson, Peabody, Mass., 1988.

Section 1 (d)

1. Rhetoric concerning such instances is fairly common at Vineyard conferences, although substantiation remains a problem. A number of works sympathetic to Wimber have appeared in recent years that purport to be thorough investigations into Wimber's claims. However, they are much less than that. Two books to be mentioned in this category are, Rex Gardner, Healing Miracles, London, DLT, 1986, and David Lewis, Healing: Fiction, Fantasy or Fact?, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1989. The first book is by a retired GP. The second, despite being authored by someone who claims to be a "Doctor" and to know something about medical conditions, is by a social anthropologist. We should note that some evangelicals remain sceptical about testimonies concerning digit, limb and eye replacement, supernatural dentistry and raising the dead. See J. MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, p.132.
2. Peter May, a practising GP from Southampton and prominent evangelical, has argued this through the columns of The Church of England Newspaper (c.f. 15/6/90, etc). In

his articles, he attempts to establish that 'Christ-like' healings (i.e., ones similar to those recorded in the Gospels), very rarely happen in the twentieth century. Further still, he claims that the healing miracles cited by Wimber are never substantiated medically. He has publicly challenged David Pytches to offer 'proof' of any one miracle: so far, the challenge has not been met. Although Peter May appears to have a vested interest in curbing the more eccentric claims of charismatic fundamentalists, his work has led to some revisionism by some supporters of Wimber, most notably Rex Gardner: 'I do agree with Peter May that far too many miraculous cures are being claimed on palpably inadequate evidence'. (CEN, July 6, 1990, p.13). Another investigation by some Sydney medical doctors into Wimber's healings also states that 'at this stage [we] are unaware of any organic healings which could be proven'.(The Briefing, April 24, 1990, p.19).

3. Wimber, addressing a conference in Sydney on 'Spiritual Warfare' (1990) states that, 'in the next decade the world will turn to Jesus as never before...neutrality towards the gospel will be a thing of the past. How will this happen? Through a revitalised church which by its unity, faith and godliness will recover the lost apostolic powers and with them will cure AIDS...and impress the gospel upon hundreds of millions'. See also John Wimber, The Kingdom of God in the Last Days, Anaheim, Mercy Publishing, 1988, p.186. Kevin Springer: "We have not witnessed any miraculous healing (of AIDS). By that I mean the total removal of any trace of the AIDS virus. However, we have seen many conditions improve dramatically. (Homosexuals)...need to be prepared for difficult questions. God uses AIDS so that homosexuals, in many instances for the first time, begin to address the issue of sexual brokeness."

4. See L. Caplan (Ed.), Studies in Fundamentalism, London, Macmillan, 1987, and L.P. Gerlach and V.H. Hine, People, Power and Change, pp.34ff.

5. Many sceptical evangelicals have levelled the charge that Cain is connected to William Branham. See Ernie Gruen, The Kansas City 'Prophets', Kansas, Full Faith Church of Love Publications, 1990, and articles by Clifford Hill in Prophecy Today, Volume 6, nos. 4, 5 and 6. Hill wrote his criticisms after meeting Cain. Hodder and Stoughton, publishers, had invited Hill to write a favourable Introduction to a book by David Pytches (Some Said it Thundered, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1990), which introduced the ministry of the prophets to the UK 'market'. Hill refused to write the Introduction after meeting Cain, claiming that he [i.e. Cain] was similar to 'a host of other occult performers who use various demonic sources to channel their messages'. These accusations did not prevent Wimber and Pytches from bringing Cain and some others of the 'Kansas Six' to London.

William Branham (1909-1965) was a charismatic fundamentalist

in the revival tradition, prominent after World War II. His powers of discernment (prophecy, words of knowledge, etc) remain legendary even today. Hollenweger (The Pentecostals, 1977, p.354) goes so far as to state that he is 'not aware of any case in which he was mistaken in the often detailed statements he made'.) However, Branham attracted notoriety for some of his views and practices. He believed that Eve had had sex with the serpent, which accounted for fallen human nature. (There are overtones of this in Cain's 'elected seed' theology, and in his fondness for total sexual purity). Branham also claimed to be the Angel (of Revelation 3:17), and prophesied that by 1977 all denominations would be consumed by the World Council of Churches; this event would be followed by the Second Coming of Christ. Branham died in 1965, yet many of his followers expected him to be resurrected. Like Cain, Branham and some of his followers believed that he was probably the product of an direct and divinely orchestrated conception.

6. See Equipping the Saints, Special UK edition, Fall 1990, p.5.
7. Ibid., p.27.
8. Ibid., pp.11-12, and Christianity Today, January 14th, 1991, p.21. Cain claims that an angel appeared to him on his first date with a girl, and told him that God was jealous. Thereafter, Cain claims to have been 'free from all sexual desires'. Interestingly, his language about Christ contains many sexual overtones. One of his more remarkable statements at the Vineyard was that 'Jesus is turned on by our desire for him'.
9. See Church of England Newspaper, July 27, 1990, p.1.
10. Equipping the Saints, vol.5., no.1, Winter 1991.
11. John Wimber and Paul Cain, Paul Cain at the Vineyard, Anaheim, Mercy Publishing, 1990, tape 2, side 1.
12. See Church of England Newspaper, April 10, 1992, p.1.

Section 2 (a)

1. R.L. Peabody, The International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences I, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1968, p.473.
2. Janet R. Cawley, Toronto Journal of Theology, 1987, Spring, 'The Concept of Power in Ecclesiology', p.16.
3. D. Wrong, Power: Its Forms, Bases and Uses, p.125.
4. D. Katz and R. Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations, 2nd ed., New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1978, p.20.
5. D. Wrong, Power, p.251.

Section 2 (b)

1. S. Clegg, The Theory of Power and Organization, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979, p.45.
2. P.M. Harrison, Authority and Power in the Free Church Tradition, Carbondale, Illinois, Southern Illinois University Press, 1959, p.5.
3. D. Wrong, Power, p.49.

4. Ibid., p. 138: 'Solidarity includes the degree of awareness of boundaries between group members and non-members...the intensity of mutual emotional identifications with one another, based on a sense of similarity...rituals symbolizing belonging and collective identity, and so on'.
5. Ibid., p.53.
6. Ibid., p.61.

Section 2 (c)

1. Besides Clegg, see Douglas Webster, Pentecostalism and Speaking in Tongues, London, Highway Press, 1964, and L.P. Gerlach and V.H. Hines, People, Power and Change, pp.55ff.
2. The 'church growth' school of thinking differentiates between 'cell', 'congregation' and 'celebration', which describes the size and type of worship participating believers may expect.
3. Sam and Gloria Thompson, Blane Cook and Paul Cain have all left the leadership of the Vineyard in recent years, all for reasons that are connected with the maintenance of unity. In 1992, Jack Deere, a prominent Vineyard leader, also left. Later that same year, Ken Gulliksen also departed.
4. L. Gerlach & V. Hines, People, Power and Change, p.57.
5. From Terry Virgo's 'New Frontiers' to David Pytches' parish church of St.Andrew, Chorleywood.
6. The expression 'Wimberised' or 'Wimbered' has been in common usage amongst charismatic evangelicals since the early 1980's.

Section 2 (d)

1. Our use of the word 'sectarian' requires some justification here. Following Bryan Wilson (Religious Sects: A Sociological Study, London, Weidenfield & Nicholson, 1970), I hold that the Vineyard is sectarian in a manner similar to the category Wilson defines as thaumaturgical (i.e., 'wonder worker'). However, a degree of introversion and manipulation is also detectable. Thaumaturgical groups require 'magic' as a proof of faith, and are usually radically inductive: 'the appeal of thaumaturgy is in local and immediate benefits...votary and leader stand in the relation of practitioner and client, rather than in that of priest and pentitent...' (p.168).
2. Richard Roberts, 'Lord, Bondsman and Churchman' in C.E. Gunton & D.W. Hardy, On Being the Church, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1989, p.191.

Part Three: Fundamentalism and Power

CHAPTER SEVEN

WIMBER'S THEOLOGY OF POWER

a Introduction. Wimber's Power Theology

We have so far examined the theme and place of power in Wimber's ideology, theology and ecclesiology. In this Chapter, we shall attempt to accumulate our arguments and observations in order to portray Wimber's overall theology of power From this position, we shall be able (both) to analyse and to critique, making some further remarks that have implications for the study of fundamentalism more generally

Our starting point is to make a simple observation Intrinsic to Christianity's self-definition is the recognition of its missionary or evangelistic calling If this is the case, then some type of apologetics will always be at the centre of the ideological, theological or ecclesiological task For fundamentalists, this is especially true in the twentieth century, where apologetics have been consistently conducted in terms of power The truth of a tradition or teaching, of experience or eschatology, are all intended to protect fundamentals concerning power the providence of an almighty God, his total control of history, nature and super-nature, and the accessibility of that divine power to human individuals who are willing to yield to it Such fundaments have been plainly articulated throughout the twentieth century by their advocates in the face of increasing pluralism, relativism or liberalism, all of which threaten to dilute and destroy Further still, as in all difficult periods of history - be it political or ideological instability - the problem of theodicy, of affirming the unlimited power of God, requires a special sharpness These conditions, at least in part, justify our choice of Wimber as a case-study in fundamentalism In periods of uncertainty, those who preach certainty often flourish liberalism is a luxury for another time ' Wimber, as a particularly sophisticated fundamentalist, is ideally adapted to appeal to constituents who are troubled by the complex and

bewildering circumstances of the world in the late twentieth century. His constructive theology offers a way of affirming God's 'almighty power' at a time when it might seriously be in danger of being limited by a range of ideas and experiences.

Because evangelism or mission is a necessary part of Christianity's identity, and in turn, that identity is taken up with affirming God's power in some shape or form, we are correct to focus on power as we find it treated in fundamentalism. Wimber's distinctive and particularly effective handling of the issue makes analysis of him particularly valuable. Few besides Wimber have grasped with such clarity the nature of the apologetic task before fundamentalists at the present time. Namely, that fundaments, where argued for, must do more than simply appeal to orthodoxy or tradition. They must actually reflect and reify God's almighty power in an age where this is in danger of being compromised.

Wimber addresses the problem of affirming divine power in a variety of ways. However, each strategy can be seen as a form of simple dualism in its own right. The most common to occur in Wimber's writing is the gap that he portrays between reality and possibility. This strategy cuts across his work on topics such as healing, deliverance, the Church and the Kingdom of God. In each case, it is usual for Wimber to suggest that the subject concerned is lacking in power ('wholeness', 'healing', 'freedom', 'strength', etc.), and that via an experience or the application of a particular formula, dynamic and counter-subversive power can be realised. Wimber systematically teaches that this is reality for most people, yet it need not be: new possibilities exist, provided one yields to the power of God.

Secondly, this necessarily implies that Wimber teaches that the individual believer or community is to be delivered out of bondage from one form of power into another. Thus, one never moves from a position of

'nothingness' or freedom into a relationship with God or Satan the believer or non-believer is either bonded to and empowered by one or the other There is no middle ground This, of course, has a significant impact on how human experience is understood and processed by believers. The world is effectively broken up into a series of divisions - divine/demonic, soul/flesh, interior/exterior, to name but a few - such that an excuse always exists in the event of God's power apparently failing In the event of any such failure, God's almighty power can still be affirmed, its apparent absence being traced to agents or reifiers who have for some reason been ineffective.

Thirdly, we must note an ironic dualism present in Wimber's ideology Although many of the Vineyard worship songs allude to the closeness of God and the immediacy of the Spirit, there is nevertheless a distance that exists between God and the world This distance is increasingly emphasised in Wimber's more recent writings on holiness, and, to a lesser extent, on prophecy This 'gap' is partly traceable to Wimber's evangelical emphasis on the justice and wrath of God [2] However, the chief source is surely the result of his emphasis on revival To enable and prepare for revival, believers must be holy and pure, to be holy, they must accept that they are presently unholy and unclean, acceptance of this implies God is distant, unable to move closer to the community of faith until it has repented, and purged and cleansed itself of sin and unbelief

The virtue of Wimber's approach to the power of God is that within the community of faith, it is both plausible and believable It does acknowledge human reality, suffering, evil and futility. It also acknowledges the possibity of transformation and of empowerment, and ultimately offers the hope of being connected to a source of utterly irresistable and almighty power However, there are substantial problems with Wimber's theology of power As we shall now see, his hard and sharp dualism is just the beginning

b Analysis of Wimber's System

Throughout Wimber's writings, his discussion of divine power assumes some basic characteristics It is real and ultimate power, that can move within and without believers. It seeks their cooperation, but is not prevented from operating where there is passive or active resistance. It is a power that is moving towards imposing itself, on the basis that creation and humanity are already in bondage to darker powers. Wimber's power language is usually emotive and reified, and is, at times, indistinguishable from pietistic supernaturalism Whilst this may be a fault, it must not be forgotten that Wimber's treatment of power has an apologetic role His early work (SWCG I, PE, etc.) is ultimately intended to affect those outside the church as much as those in it. Given this, how does our use of writings from social science inform our overall discussion?

There is no evidence that Wimber is versed in theories of power from either sociology or theology Yet with regard to divine power, we must begin by noting that Wimber appears at first sight to regard power as a 'thing-in-itself', that is, an event of supernatural origin rather than an occurrence arising out of human interaction This immediately puts our study at odds with Wimber's fundamental convictions, since we have been suggesting a much more complex and interrelated matrix for understanding the place of power in fundamentalist communities We hold, at least in part, and along with other scholars, that power-related phenomena occurring in the Vineyard may have little or nothing to do with the exterior activity of divine power, or, for that matter, Satanic power ' What then is the appropriate form for addressing power-related phenomena in Wimber's works and churches, given that some of it might be of divine origin, and some of it the product of other factors, such as auto-suggestion, psychosomatic responses, rhetoric, inductive hermeneutics, the effect of a charismatic personality, and so on?

From a social science perspective, Michael Mann (and to a lesser extent, Weber), suggest that the term 'power' is really an umbrella word for various modes of organisation, it is not in any way a thing in itself. Similarly, writers like Clegg have suggested that power is not a property, but rather a series of relationships in which different kinds of power are in use For example, Clegg asserts that what is commonly called 'episodic power', a belief that power only exists when it is actually exercised under certain circumstances (i e , the actual act of disciplining a child), is still a useful concept for discussing much of what is generally termed 'power' Clegg maintains this, aware of the contrasting theory of others such as Bachrach and Baratz (1970) who maintain a more 'dispositional' view of power, which takes more seriously latent power, resistance, and the power of non-event or episode (i e , power lies in the office of parenthood, whether exercised or not) The strength of Clegg's work for our analysis lies in its richness and openness He builds on Mann's view of communities as 'organized power networks', by allowing for episodic and dispositional forms of power to conflate and interrelate within social organisation and structure In this view, agencies or nodal points can be both episodic and dispositional. Yet Clegg is not prepared to see ordered totalities as the prior framework into which power 'fits'. Social organisation is an achievement of power, not its generative principle Communities, even those that are fundamentalist in orientation, cannot be reduced to a single systemic ordering principle, to a single, bounded continuum as the a priori from which power is generated

Clegg's thesis permits us to offer a more systematic description of fundamentalism, since the model of circuits of power, functioning inductively for Wimber, appears to be the most fruitful method for systematising and analysing the tremendous variety of phenomena and theology that occurs within the Vineyard However, as we have already mentioned, Wimber himself appears to have a much simpler view of power, which does not sit easily with the complexity of Clegg's conceptual

framework. In actual fact, this is not quite so. Wimber does implicitly acknowledge the relatedness of power, even if he is shy of owning it. His work on healing, for example, recognises that the power of God operates through an assortment of physical and parapsychological mechanisms indeed, mechanisms and formulas play a large part in Wimber's power theology. Wimber also speaks a great deal about 'empowering', and often devotes considerable space in books and lectures to criticising existing mechanisms within the church that fail to reify power (e.g., programme evangelism). In some of his early conferences up until 1986, he was especially critical of stress placed on knowledge, creeds or doctrine. These, he argued, were no substitute for actually experiencing the power of God, this of course, as we have already seen, was argued for via an inductive theological strategy

Then there is the question of authority. Our earlier observations on the relationship between the perceived nature of Jesus' authority and the kind of authority exercised by Wimber are important, but we can go further here. Sociologically speaking, charismatic authority may be said to exist because it is attributed to the charismatic figure by followers. Wimber would agree with this. Jesus' authority was partly derived from the respect and admiration he earned from performing signs and wonders Yet Wimber would also say Jesus had an authority independent of human attribution, resulting from his divinity, which simply needed acknowledging rather than attributing In other words, Jesus has a power that is independent from any 'circuit' or relatedness, although he enjoys both With Jesus as the 'model' for believers, this Christology finds its way into Vineyard ecclesiology Power/authority relationships are readily acknowledged, and understood to be necessary. Yet each believer also has a 'personal' authority or power, just like Jesus, which can be exercised at will, only in relation to the Father. Thus, if Jesus possessed authority and power independent of human attribution, so can believers. Inevitably, this can lead to unrestrained individualism and particularity, believers can sometimes imagine that they are at the centre of God's attention, at the expense of any wider commitments that divine power might have [2]

The combination of Clegg and Berger also provide us with a useful frame of reference in discussing Wimber's perspective on the kinds of power exercised by the church down the ages. Wimber maintains that it was the exercise of signs and wonders and Jesus' charismatic authority that provided a 'model' for the apostles to copy. They could only replicate this behaviour once they themselves had been empowered by the same force that enabled Jesus. It is Wimber's contention that the Church has consistently been distracted by less important issues throughout history up until the present, and has often failed to reify the power of God to the world, its prime responsibility. For Wimber, an undue emphasis on correct doctrine, ecclesiastical polity or sheer disobedience have led to the potential of God's power being eclipsed from the church This accounts for Wimber's interest in revival, the 'Third Wave', and other movements of the Holy Spirit These occurrences shake the Church, forcing it to abandon strategies or doctrines that have become too comfortable or ineffective. The Church is now forced again, just as it was in the time of the first apostles, to depend utterly on the transcendent power of God for its source of life and witness Consistently, throughout his works, Wimber points to groups such as Jansenists, Methodists or Pentecostals as examples of people who have, in Clegg's words, 'virtually achieved a totality of power'.

As a theory on ecclesial development, Wimber's view of church history resembles Harnack's more sophisticated 'transpotentiation theory'. Harnack, another inductive strategist, according to Berger, believed the church had undergone a kind of 'Fall' in its first three centuries, getting too caught up in authority, orders, doctrine and creeds, ultimately losing touch with the divine transcendence. In other words, the source and type of power operating in the early church shifted imperceptibly from the divine to the human. We do not have space to examine transpotentiation in any more detail here, but we can note that this view of history presents a problem, namely, what has happened to God's almighty power, if it only appears to be working intermittently? Wimber's answer to this is found in his sharp dualism The past and present age are only being 'invaded' by

God's power (KOG, etc) the fullness of the Kingdom is yet to come. Until then, God is at war with Satan, although the final victory is assured to Christ and the Church.[3] Thus, any movement that appears to be near to achieving a totality of power - in Wimber's view, this would have to be a 'revival' of some kind - points both to the potentiality of the church, the superiority of God's power, and, ultimately, to the end of history, when God's power will be fully established throughout creation

Following this, we might inquire as to how this victory is begun and ended. For Wimber, it is in Christ; although, as we have noted before, it is operative in a peculiar way. On the one hand, Wimber affirms mainstream modern evangelical thinking, which interprets the atonement in the light of the doctrine of penal substitution That is to say, God is essentially angry with the world, its sin and rebellion. As a God of justice, this sin cannot go unaccounted for, and the deserved penalty for humanity is death and damnation However, God is also merciful, so instead of punishing humanity and allowing them to incur the wrath that is due, Jesus, as Son of God, is sacrificed and punished in place of humanity. Wimber tends to affirm this type of approach in his more dogmatic works (see DSG, PP etc.), but it is really only a fraction of the story Wimber also believes humanity, nature and creation to be under the power of Satan Thus, a second atonement theory, more familiar to Pentecostal believers, also operates in Wimber's theology. If anything, this theory is the more dominant of the two Christ invades the earth as a type of 'guerilla leader', leading a subversive band of individuals who will ultimately counter Satan and his allies Christ acts as an example to his followers, leading them in a heavenly revolt against the powers of darkness, which are presently 'sitting tenants'. Victory is finally achieved when Jesus is killed, the cross, ironically, becoming a 'self-destruct button' which Satan is lured into pressing The death of Jesus leads to the harrowing of hell, and allows God to raise Christ, connoting the end of death as an insuperable enemy This atonement theory also carries a number of other benefits for believers. It brings victory, peace and salvation for the present life, which, crucially, can be experienced now Christ's death is not just about eternal life, but about the present quality of the

individual believer's life. Thus, for Wimber, Christ's atonement is both episodic and dispositional, a process as well as a goal.

However, the stress on the acts of Christ, including his death, hide a deep weakness in Wimber's theology He completely ignores any attempt to deal with the incarnation. For Wimber, the virgin birth is only significant because it is a miracle, and because it 'proves' Jesus' divinity But any mention of Christ's 'self-emptying' (kenosis), and the significance of his adoption of weakness (c.f. Phil 2 1 - 11) is not to be found One of the weaknesses of fundamentalism, it is often alleged, it its inability to cope with paradox. The incarnation, 'strength made perfect in weakness', is surely one of the most critical paradoxes at the heart of the New Testament, yet it is nowhere discussed in depth by Wimber. There are many reasons for this, no doubt, but we shall mention just three

Firstly, an acknowledgement of God's conscious adoption of an identity with weakness in Jesus threatens the recovery of a full omnipotence If the enterprise of fundamentalism is to be partly understood in terms of defending omnipotence against pluralism and liberalism, the suggestion that God chooses to limit himself in Christ implies weakness The traditional route out of this paradox for fundamentalists is to focus on Christ's works, rather than his being, since the works are at least recorded as being acts that point to omnipotence. Secondly, the incarnation confers a status on humanity and reality that does not sit easily with Wimber's dualism, particularly in the realm of healing Wimber's theology invites believers to become more than what they are. healed, whole, fulfilled or empowered. The consequence of this is that Christ's identity with those who cannot or will not change is undervalued. In this respect, critics of Wimber often allege that he has no theology of death or illness. Those who are premanently disabled, for example, can quite rightly point out that Wimber's theology implies they are unacceptable as they are, both to God and to society. Thirdly, Christ's willingness to suffer, and ultimately to

succumb to torture and death, is essentially passed over. Wimber's interest lies in what the death of Christ achieves, and who it affects The actual fact of the death itself is however, a problem for him, since it is quite plain that Christ either lost his power here, or chose not to use it. Neither of these options is really acceptable to Wimber. he cannot conceive of God not using his power, or of it being limited. This accounts for the 'self-destruct button' theory of atonement, at least in part. The cross is not Christ voluntarily resigning his powers, and willingly suffering as a sign of his solidarity with the most broken of humanity It is instead a kind of trick, an 'ambush' that commits Satan to a path that ultimately results in victory for God

All these observations are still a long way from fixing 'ultimate interests' or exposing 'dominant ideologies' These have been the concerns of other Chapters What we have been concerned to show here is that Wimber, in common with other fundamentalists, cannot be reduced and mapped onto any theory of power that stresses a single sovereign conception Only a model of circuits of power will do, in which agents organisation, charisma, mutual social integration, episodic and dispositional power have their part to play, clearly grounded in the grammar of power as a concept. Given this, we shall examine three key nodal points within the power circuit, in order to test further our theories.

c. Difficulties in Wimber's System, and the Emerging Theory of Power

It is interesting to note that Berger maintains that the inductive model occupies the middle ground of theological strategy, and is often a position of compromise which is vulnerable. Practioners of the inductive strategy, even fundamentalists like Wimber, usually enjoy a combination of success and legitimation for a time, but the long term prospects for such theologies are precarious There are a number of reasons for this. One can begin with an inductive approach, only to find that it implodes, collapsing back into simplistic reaffirmation of tradition (deduction) Or, the strategy can be vulnerable in another direction one can begin with induction, but fail to halt a slide into reductionism This is a particular fault in fundamentalist groups, such as elements within the 'New Right' in North America One begins with an inductive proposition, say seeking and propagating the experience of biblical family values as the basis for the recovery of American morality But what one often ends up with is conflation of (desirable) contemporary values and poor biblical exegesis, established as 'tradition' Similarly, Berger supports this argument with reference to nineteenth century 'liberals', who often identified the essence of Christianity with ethics or the cultural achievements of western civilisiation However, we must note that fundamentalists are only in danger of moving from inductive to reductive or deductive strategies. they do not necessarily have to fall into the trap

Wimber, for example, mostly avoids either of these pitfalls His relentless pursuit of empowering experience and immanence means that any reductionism or deduction is always one step short of the dominant inductive strategy. However, it is worth mentioning that Wimber's dualism is at least partly reductive If all events and experiences are processed in terms of either divine or satanic power, then we have a kind of mythic reductionism on our hands, which converts all reality into something

altogether other. This is still the realm of transcendence however, such that the inductive strategy remains secure What is it then, that actually allows Wimber, along with other fundamentalists, to retain inductive theological strategies?

In the end, it is the place of Jesus and the Spirit in the life of the Church that is most significant. Berger points out that the abiding problem for all practioners of the inductive strategy, whether fundamentalist or not, is the problem of certainty. Yet Christianity posits that religious experience may be validated by reference to an historical person, present not only to us in the Spirit (subjective experience), but also in historical record (The New Testament). Thus, Christianity has a form of permanent access to records of religious experience that can assist in the validation of that which is contemporary

Therefore, what follows now is some discussion of the central Christological, Pneumatological and ecclesiological considerations that are most illustrative of Wimber's inductive stategy. We shall be paying particular attention to the theme of power once more, in order to gain a perspective on the major difficulties in Wimber's constructive and highly adaptive fundamentalist theology

(1) Christological Considerations. Jesus as Power

We have already noted, in previous Chapters, how Christ and his work is depicted by Wimber The ideological focus of Vineyard worship tends towards pressing the theme of Christ the King, enthroned in glory. Christ is the glorious object of worship, the mediator of love and power to his people, but rarely the one who in his humanity, exemplifies a way of life into the activity of God Closely connected with this Christology is a theology that operates with a concept of divine power that upholds the possibility of reified omnipotence, not only in the life of Christ, but also in the life of the individual believer.' What suffers in this

theology is the self-giving of Christ on the cross, the very abdication of omnipotence, in the wider interests of meeting creation in love, which necessarily includes risking rejection, and, ultimately, death.

Clearly, the power of Christ (and God) portrayed is a supernatural brute force, even though this is masked by Wimber through his ideological stress on love and intimacy. The careless use of militaristic language in Vineyard worship[2] discloses the fact that the programme envisaged by power evangelism will always place respect for humanity and loving relationship in subservience to a sharper spiritual agenda, an all too common feature of fundamentalist communities. In Wimber's case, this can partly be tracked in the selective appropriation of Old Testament texts, both in ideology and theology. In worship for example, suggestive phrases about 'taking the promised land', or being 'led into victory' appear to imply a thirst for dominance and self-assertion In theology, similar problems frequently emerge in a variety of places: evangelism, spiritual warfare and healing, to name but a few. Of course, there is a peculiar irony here with this type of inductive fundamentalism. In the desire to recover the experience and conditions of the first apostles, which gave rise to substantial numerical church growth, charismatic fundamentalists often look to the Old Testament for guidance more than the New Testament (the first apostles had no New Testament), and are often just as selective in their choice of texts and application as their forebears [3] All of the observations mentioned above are most pertinent for our Christological inquiry here, since Wimber places Christ at the head of such activity, presiding over a church that is intended to imitate him A number of cardinal problems arise directly out of this order

The first to mention is the theme of weakness [4] We have already noted that many aspects of the Christian life (struggle, weakness, endurance, powerlessness, etc), receive little attention from Wimber, except as episodes or patterns to be overcome There seems to be little recognition of the possibility, as von Balthasar has suggested, that we may sometimes

be led into a sharing of Christ's sufferings, and that God might be most expressive in the 'gap' that exists between desolation and triumph.[5] The relegation of real human weakness in the power evangelism programme is mirrored by the lack of focus on divine power being 'made perfect in weakness' (2 Cor. 12 9). Granted the cross is a frequent topic, but only as a demonstration of power, to be seen in the light of the resurrection, and the defeat of Satan.

The failure to grasp the significance of Christ's weakness and its implications arises directly out of the distortions that follow from a fundamentalist inductive strategy. In the interests of protecting the omnipotence of God in the face of modernity, the delicate balance between the antitheses of love and power are disturbed. What is lost in this is the realisation that although God is omnipotent, power over creation has been renounced, and God instead only approaches his creatures with love There is too, some confusion over the actual nature of weakness On the one hand, weakness is something to be emulated. Christ became weak, and those who follow him are invited to be weak, not powerful (2 Cor 13 4, Heb 5 : 12, 2 Cor. 1 27, etc.). Yet there is also the weakness that is to be overcome moral or personal (1 Thess. 5 12), sickness, and lastly, economic (Acts 20 . 35).[6] Clearly, the burden of Wimber's power theology lies in acting upon the weakness that is to be overcome, rather than the weakness that is to be copied. The natural appeal of power evangelism is that it takes advantage of a modern condition in which power is greatly esteemed, and weakness is undervalued. This condition has itself arisen because of the perceived problems modernity and pluralism pose to Christianity. The inductive response, especially when practised by fundamentalists, is to renew their experience of God as omnipotent, and then to systematically reassert this in dogma that counters the influence of any prevailing power Yet we must say against this that Jesus' incarnation is a deliberate abdication of total power and authority. Although he did perform acts that overcame various types of weakness, both

in himself (e.g., temptation narratives) and others (e.g , healing, deliverance, etc), his life was one of sharing and solidarity with a pathologically weak humanity. He did not just teach the value of weakness and utter dependance before God, but actually lived it, and raised its status in the life of the Godhead (Phil. 2 . 1 - 13) From his birth to his death, and even in resurrected glory, Jesus risked weakness against certainty, love against power.

Inextricably linked to weakness is the question of Christ's suffering. Here again, we find a major problem with Wimber's power theology. It is true that there is ample evidence in the ministry of Jesus that the God whom he reveals to us is the God who discloses himself with mighty signs of his presence and activity. God stands against evil and smites it with his power, and in parts of the New Testament, followers of Christ are clearly expected to do likewise Yet there is also a different perspective Jesus began 'to teach that the Son of Man must suffer many things' (Mark 8 31). How is this so, if all Christ has to do is exercise his divine power against the weaker powers of Satan and the world? How does the suffering of Christ fit into power evangelism? The Gospels appear to offer a dynamic in which Jesus does not control and destroy the enemy, but rather, surrenders himself to the worst those enemies can actually do The crucifixion of Jesus is the summary of God's respect for creation and its freedom God expresses himself in suffering: people are let to be themselves, even to wrong and ignore God, and show disrespect to the point of killing This is not met with counter-force however, and neither is the cross a 'booby trap', in which Satan accidentally destroys himself by meddling with a greater power. The suffering of God - supremely exemplified in Christ on the cross - shows a willingness to go through the final destructive experience, and so respect the power that is given to the world. Equally, the resurrection does not simply reverse this, responding to the taunt 'come down from the cross' a few days late It is the overcoming of evil and death in a way that affirms yet judges earthly powers, and exposes their limits.[7]

Thus, the suffering of Christ, when properly attended to, shows that Wimber's power theology presses omnipotence to a degree that eclipses God's self-giving love. It is in weakness, vulnerability, suffering and in death, that Christ overcomes power, although his 'power encounters' do demonstrate that he can more than match the exercise and effect of Satan's power Yet ultimately, he does not choose this way for himself: Christ gradually abandons 'signs and wonders', as his will and life converge with God's heart at the pinnacle of Golgotha Thomas Smail comments:

> This is not the way of superior and coercing power, it is the way of self-giving love. In the New Testament, it is the cross that give the love of God its meaning and definition ... He does not rescue people by bursting violently into the prison from the outside but by going into the prison himself with them, so that in the presence of his love the locks are turned and the doors swing open [8]

So, divine self-giving, which expresses itself fully and decisively at the heart of human history at Calvary, is greater than all manifestations of coercive power, whether natural or supernatural.[9]

Of course, other problems with Wimber's Christology could be mentioned, but we have chosen here to deal specifically with the key problems as they relate to power. Much of our focus has hinged on the incarnation and its connection with omnipotence, which has exposed the distorted view of the nature of God's power that Wimber holds. Indeed, many peculiar doctrines occur in Wimber's theology as a direct result of his not having an incarnational basis to his Christology.[10] However, one of the key weaknesses, I would suggest, is the explicit divorce between the crucified Christ and the Holy Spirit. Life in the Spirit and in the Church is shaped by conformity to the image and likeness of Christ (DSG, Chap 1 2 Cor. 3 18). This conformity however, can be arrived at through suffering and weakness· to be 'sealed by the Spirit' is to be marked by the shame of Good Friday as well as the glory of Easter. In the Gospel of John, the Spirit is given with nail-marked hands to the disciples (Jn 20 22), in sharp contrast to the account in Acts. So, it is to Wimber's pneumatology that we now turn.

(2) Pneumatological Considerations. The Spirit as Force

We have noted previously that Wimber's treatment of the Spirit often reduces him to a brute, supernatural force, which cannot be refused. Just as some fundamentalists locate the prime source of their (and God's) power in a text or a particular tradition, so Wimber, in common with other charismatic fundamentalists, locates the evidence for God's omnipotence in the activity of the Spirit. The so-called 'Third Wave' is a reassertion of power over a world in need of convincing, convicting and saving, and as a movement of God, in Wimber's thinking, it resources the Church to be agents of God's power, establishing the conditions for the Kingdom of God to be built in the present.

However, as we have suggested in the previous Section, the works of power that Jesus performed - enabled by the Spirit - are not to be divorced from either the incarnation or the self-giving of Christ at the cross The compartmentalism between 'power encounters' and suffering love is a false one, and a product of a selective inductive theological strategy An example of this is Wimber's citation of various Gospel passages in most of his works (PE, PH, SWCG I, etc.) that show Jesus regularly healing people and casting out demons, as part of his daily work (e g., Matt 8 . 16) Yet Wimber often fails to acknowledge that the Jesus who performed these miracles did so 'in order to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases"' The Synoptic Gospels align Jesus' signs and wonders with his suffering. we are not intended to see Jesus' activity as the 'hurtling of divine energy against demonic evil' '' The power at work in Jesus is the power of the servant of God, who shares our sufferings, carries diseases, and endures utter failure, rejection and death.

Similar problems exist with Wimber's reading of the Acts of the Apostles, and other parts of the New Testament. In Acts, Wimber's focus tends to be on particular episodes in which healings or deliverance took place, and the church grew numerically as a result Preferred accounts for Wimber, used extensively at the Vineyard and beyond, all validate present

practice. For example, the story of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8) is interpreted as an exemplary use of words and knowledge for evangelistic purposes, the account of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5) serves to remind believers to submit to apostles and prophets, and the incident concerning the failure of Jewish exorcists (Acts 19) is used to demonstrate the superiority of genuine believers wielding the power of Jesus. What is generally absent from Wimber's reading of Acts is any mention of the disciples being called to suffer in the same way that Jesus did Martyrdom, imprisonment, public beatings, conflict, disasters and rejection play little part in Wimber's inductive restructuring of the message of Acts As with his Christology, Wimber's pneumatology divorces signs and wonders, part of the work of the Spirit, from a leading into a life that involves sharing in Christ's pain, which is also part of the Spirit's work

This is clearly one of the fundamental problems in Wimber's pneumatology. The power of the Spirit is deemed by Wimber to be a force that stands apart form the world, firing 'laser beams of divine energy'[12] against other powers, which must necessarily be defeated. It is not a subtle view of the Holy Spirit There is no mention at all of one of the prime functions of the Spirit, namely to 'lead us (all) into all truth' (i.e , reality) In Wimber's view, the task of the Spirit is to move believers well beyond this goal 'calling common people to move above and beyond natural laws and walk with him in the realm of the miraculous' [13] In our view, this may be correctly termed 'neurotic' If ordinary life is to be eschewed because the Spirit is only truly available on a different plain, then God's genuine engagement with the world in Christ is reduced to a charade. Surely the realm of reality and the Spirit are the same? Of course, Wimber's view of the Spirit accounts in part for the agenda of the signs and wonders programme. The Spirit can be coercive and brute, for an end is achieved through the means, and each justifies the other. If ordinary people can witness the Spirit at work in a way that is demonstrably powerful - as it was in the Book of Acts - then people will experience God's power for themselves, and the church will grow [14]

We are entitled to ask at this point about the nature of the power fueling this pneumatology. Essentially, it is a power that directs

individuals to Jesus or the Father, and initiates them into the life of the Church. There is nothing necessarily at fault with this, namely the notion of the Spirit as a 'witness'. But what is lacking, ironically, is any concept of this power as being a power of love. This is ironic when one considers the attention Wimber pays to intimacy with God, a major feature of his ideology. Yet the power that leads individuals to this experience is seldom spoken of in terms of love by Wimber, except in connection with healing. Yet the power of God, the Holy Spirit, is the power of love because, according to Christian tradition, the Spirit does not stand apart from the events of Good Friday and Easter (c.f 1 John 4 . 8, 16) God is love, and that love consitutes the very being of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit it is this power that creates and redeems, in active participation with the world and its creatures The world is not made, saved or treated by a brute, coercive force, but by a self-empying process that is at the heart of God's gift of himself to humanity. Consequently, the power of the Spirit can be nothing less than the power of love that is poured out on all flesh and into the hearts of believers Gifts of the Spirit and fruits of the Spirit are agents of love, not power, intended for a deepter level of individual and communal relationality All too often, fundamentalist groups treat gifts, be they tongues or texts, prophecy or tradition, as tools of God that assault creation, the gifts of the Spirit are not propositional in nature, designed to be coercive by those who experience them They are relational in nature, God's speech to a world in need of restoration, where signs of love are frequently eclipsed by demonstrations of power [15]

Of course, the preoccupation with the Spirit as a brute power, and the consequential ecclesiology proposed by Wimber as a result, has its roots in his Christology 'Christ is the subject of the church' claims Moltmann, therefore Christology will always become 'the dominant theme of ecclesiology' [16] No ecclesiology stands on its own feet, it evolves itself from Christology, pneumatology and theology, as each group seeks to work out the history and practice of God's dealings with humanity. Wimber's distinctive views of the work and works of Christ, and the follow-up work of the Spirit, clearly point to God as an invading power, working from without. This has no doubt arisen, at least in part, because of the desire

to re-establish a foundational base for omnipotence, which most fundamentalists think has been eroded On one level, we might sympathise with this Defending the possibilities of God's almighty power appears to be a noble task, particularly in the face of the modern situation However, there are a number of casualties as a result of this stance, and we need to note some of these for our thesis

The first problem to note is ironic, namely, that an insistence by Wimber on the omnipotence of the Spirit in the life of the Church leads to a dilution of omnipresence. The Spirit becomes privatised, the reifiable property of the faithful community that is in touch with the 'Third Wave' Yet orthodox Christian tradition must surely assert that 'there are no longer any periods devoid of the Spirit', or indeed, places [17] Wimber's defence of omnipotence ultimately leads to its weakening, since it is only really possible for him to speak of the Spirit working in specific episodic ways that connect with results, such as healing or church growth A second problem arises from this observation the ambiguity and risk of the Spirit's work is dissipated A defensive view of the Spirit is over protected by the community, so that it becomes withdrawn and tribal. This is a common feature of most fundamentalist groups, and it is maintained in such communities by believing that God's greatest power or revelation is only understood by a few, who must therefore act as guardians of the truth for the good of the world.

A third problem, and one to which we have have already alluded, is the manufactured schism that exists between the power of the Spirit and the Spirit as love Paul tells the Corinthians to 'make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially prophecy' (1 Cor 14 1) Yet as we have seen, the gifts are pursued as signs of power, not always for love This is true of prophecy and words of knowledge in particular, which are often used to coerce, shame, menace and instill a sense of fear in the individual All too often, prophecy witnesses not to love, but to the charisma and power of the prophet, and to the power of the community that witnesses its action.[18] Naturally, we may argue here that such pneumatological problems are inevitable in a community where there is no working trinitarian doctrine. Hierarchies of power remain in place, and

the ideal of loving interdependence, mutuality and respect for both internal and external relationships is lost. Wimber's pneumatology is a forceful presentation of the Spirit, but one which leaves little space for freedom and love in the life of God, as he relates to his creation. With this in mind, we now proceed to critique how Wimber's Christology and pneumatology define his ecclesiology.

(3) Ecclesiological Considerations: The Church as Power-Broker

Many theologians in the twentieth century have, in their own particular way, differentiated between the 'form' and 'essence' of the Church In practice, this distinction has approximated 'essence' with the transcendent and the Church that is to be when Christ returns. The 'form' however, is generally connected with how the Church organises itself according to its historical tradition [19] Of course, in making this somewhat sharp distinction, most theologians acknowledge that the two are intimately inter-related Yet for our critique here, the distinctions are most helpful

In the first place, the separation between 'form' and 'essence' reminds us of the eschatalogical orientation of Wimber's Vineyards For Wimber, the Church is to be an organisation dedicated to the promulgation of divine power in the material world. Yet the ecclesiology is not much more developed than this. In common with almost all other fundamentalists, Wimber lacks a theological estimate of what the Church is he seems to show no interest in it as a catholic or corporate body, or even as the 'body of Christ' It is an ideological construct, rooted in the eschatalogical hope, the imperfect being made into perfect.[20] The practical necessity of visible communities is recognised, but their identity and existence is entirely subordinated to the task of individuals and communities holding and reifying divine power Effectively, the Church is simply a basic unit,

a collection of people who can do more together if united than individuals who operate on their own. Secondly, the distinction between 'form' and 'essence' gives us a further insight into Wimber's dualism Many fundamentalists have appealed to the essence of the Gospel in order to critique the present form of the Church, and Wimber is no exception His power theology contributes most directly to his ecclesiology at this point. By contrasting the omnipotence of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) with the impotence of the Church, Wimber creates a gap between what the Church is and what it could be like. Appealing to the imminence of the eschatalogical hope has a similar effect, namely contrasting the (alleged) conditions of life under the Kingdom of God with those of the present Church.[21] Into this gap is placed Wimber's power theology, which forms the basis for ecclesiology equipping individuals and groups to be organised around reifying God's power through signs and wonders

There are many problems with this approach. For one thing, there is little to prevent the community of believers from mapping their own desires for power and success onto the character of God. Equally, any doctrine of the Church is clearly not taken seriously. More seriously perhaps, the absence of an incarnational theology leads to a 'power ecclesiology', in which the community of believers feels called to dominate and rule, not serve and suffer. Those theologians who have criticised the ideology/ecclesiology present in modern renewal songs are unanimous in their view that the Church presented in the worship is too triumphant, and too remote from real life.[22] Perhaps the most serious charge however, is that there is no liberation from idols of power in such an ecclesiology. The Church which does not reveal the crucified Jesus but only the exalted Christ inevitably runs the risk of honouring exaltation itself, whilst rejecting the way of the cross. A number of considerations arise out of this praxis Believers identify Christianity too closely with power and success, and fail to find a place for the suffering Christ and the work of the Spirit in forming the Church around Good Friday and Easter Sunday The full life of Jesus can only be manifested through the Church if its form is

like the death of Jesus.[23] Where this dialectical process is broken, which we would suggest is the case in the 'signs and wonders movement', there is little to prevent believers from idolising power, or pursuing glory and exaltation either individually or communally, under the mistaken assumption that this is a sign or reflection of God's glory dwelling within their work and worship.

Some of the observations cited above are reflected in the work of Thomas Smail. Smail, a prominent critic of charismatic and revivalist theology, has also suggested that the thirst for power in communities like Wimber's has quenched love as a basis for ministry.

> My own experience of charismatic renewal strongly suggests that if some of its leaders were as concerned with being men of love as they are with being men of power, because they saw that the only power the Spirit has is the power of love, it would be a more wholesome thing than it has sometimes been.[24]

Wimber's struggle with power and love in theology and pneumatology is replayed, inevitably, in his ecclesiology. The use of spiritual gifts in building up the Church, albeit healing, deliverance or prophecy, are often executed with insensitivity, and a degree of force. This approach has several costs. For instance, the expectation of believers is often that God will intervene on their behalf with power, enabling escape from calamity or dramatic rescue from evil This is at the expense of appreciating that God sometimes takes us <u>through</u> evil, not <u>out</u> of it. Jesus himself was not rescued from death, even though he saved others from sickness and death his way of life is exemplified by enduring sufferings, not transcending them. Equally, an ecclesiology of power often fails to understand the mission of the Church where no demonstrable power related phenomena are occurring, except the power of love. What does the signs and wonders movement have to say about Christian communities that simply offer love and acceptance, where perhaps no healings take place at all? Surely we must say that such places are as capable of showing God's power in its

prime form (love), and that 'signs and wonders' looks rather shallow by comparison [55] There are individuals and communities too, that eschew power altogether and choose to witness via a 'suffering presence', taking on board the conditions of others in a gesture of solidarity, love and friendship This is the power of love incarnate, the body of Christ acting creatively and transformingly on suffering, offering only love in the face of whatever resistance

Whilst all of the observations above tell of major weaknesses in Wimber's ecclesiology, the primary problem is this. his Christology and pneumatology convert the Church (and its leaders) into God's power-brokers In spite of a crude, weak ecclesiology, Wimber's theology places the Church at the centre of God's attention, and locates God's power as coming <u>through</u> the Church to the world Of course, this seriously weakens any doctrine of omnipresence, and ignores the reality of God being 'ahead of all evangelism, carrying on his mission in the world . . the abundance of God is poured out way beyond the boundaries of the Church, and [the] vital task is in discerning this abundance and accepting it with joy'.[56] This distortion has arisen in Wimber's theology as a direct result of his linking signs and wonders to church growth, and then of elevating the concept to a status where it is deemed central to God's (successful) activity in modern society

That criticism in itself might give the impression that with Wimber, as with other forms of fundamentalism, we are basically dealing with a perversion of something that is basically sound Yet the very heart of Christian communication is being questioned. is the Gospel primarily about power, or is it about love? An emphasis on power generally leads to the good news being presented in mechanistic or functional terms it is useful for meeting needs, fulfilling, meeting crises or limitations or solving problems It is a gospel that repairs things that have gone wrong (especially in healing ministries), or is essentially practical in a host of ways The seductiveness of this is that this is partly true there is

indeed good news for problematic situations and persons The flaw lies in its inability to appreciate the freedom and expansiveness of God, and the universality of his activity and love Of course, recognising the comprehensiveness of God's activity throughout creation leaves little room for 'monopolising' God's power, and for the establisment of fundamentalist groups whose identity depends to some extent on believing that they have more insight into and more of God's power than other groups An appreciation of the universality of God's love and power can therefore prevent the error that many fundamentalist groups commit, namely, acting as God's primary power-broker, which in turn elevates the self-importance of the Church to the degree that God's own free activity is ignored.

We can conclude this section by making three final observations about Wimber's ecclesiology as it relates to the world. Firstly, as far as the church fellowship is concerned, hardship and suffering are things to be avoided Even the recognition that genuine community involves pain and hard work, as well as celebration, is suppressed. This tends to encourage what we have called 'neurotic religion' believers subscribe to the church to avoid pain, rather than deal with its reality. Secondly, the activity of God beyond the boundaries of the church is seldom discussed This does tend to fuel the arguments of those who accuse fundamentalists of being sectarian in character The world beyond the church - especially in worship songs - is only considered insofar as it is a stronghold of evil, and therefore the object of spiritual warfare God's purposes for the non-human world are only obliquely implied in the affirmation of God's universal Kingship. As one commentator has put it, fundamentalist ecclesiology can be characterised as 'the Bride of Christ [spending] rather too long looking in the mirror'.[27] Thirdly, and lastly, a fundamentalist ecclesiology like Wimber's takes little interest in social responsibility and issues of injustice Costly acts of compasssion or suffering in solidarity with victims of human hurt are rarely emphasised in worship or teaching This directly echoes the root failure of most fundamentalists to grapple with the significance of the incarnation of Christ

(4) Evaluation. Christology, Pneumatology and Ecclesiology

We have attempted to show that Wimber's ecclesiology can only be understood in the light of his Christology and pneumatology. Not only that, the weaknesses inherent in his theology are necessarily imported into the ethos of the Vineyard For example, the emphasis on the works of Christ, at say, the expense of his being (i.e., incarnation), is often reflected in Church life by the gifts of the Spirit being valued more highly than the fruits of the Spirit Wimber's central concern in the 'signs and wonders programme', and in his power theology, is to argue for the omnipotence of God This is not just an abstract ideal, but a radical concern to see the Church reflect and reify the power of God that is at its disposal, provided it is faithful Numerical church growth, following the witnessing of signs and wonders, is simply confirmation of God's almightiness over all other forms of power.

The weakness of his system is that God's universal love, which respects creation and grants it freedom to respond in a myriad of ways, is subjugated by the power theology Not only that, the power of God is taken into the Church, such that those who need it may only receive it by witnessing its action, and then by opting into a new community In the interests of defending and exporting the power of God, the dualism between Church and world becomes too sharp The omnipresence of the Spirit becomes meaningless, and God (and the Church) are reduced to intervening power-agents in the world dominated by other powers In such a theology, the God (or Church) that is known in love, pain and redeeming self-surrender is lost.

But why is love more important than power? Clearly, one of the dangers of an over-simplistic appreciation of omnipotence is that human freedom becomes meaningless. Yet, omnipotence can be an agent of love, not in the sense of control, but in the sense that the capacity for God to be

fully involved in and fully willed in creation as its sustainer remains But it is not a controlling power in the manipulative sense of the word It is rather a loving capacity that can enable creation to become fully what it is intended to be through loving co-operation with God The divine presence should not restrict human activity, it should enable it God's primary being is love (1 John 4 . 7 - 12) not power, and those who live in that love will live in God, and God will live with them This, rather that a naked assertion of power, is what will bring about redeeming transformation

Thus, we hold that (in the memorable phrase of Barth), Wimber's theology makes God 'the prisoner of his own power'.[20] In place of this, I wish to propose a picture of God that involves making no denial of God's omnipotence, no reduction in the affirmation of divine power What it does involve is a modification of the way in which the concept of that power is understood That point has been well put in a recent book by Thomas Tracy 'God,' he writes,

> creates a field of other agents whose integrity he respects and so whose independent actions conditions his choices This amounts to a purposeful limitation of the scope of his own activity, but it does not represent a renunciation of omnipotence, but rather a renunciation of certain uses of power [21]

This 'field of agents', (network or framework have been our terms to denote the same) encourages freedom of response, relationships that are reciprocal, and, ultimately perhaps, love This same fundamental point may be made in a slightly different way I have been speaking so far in terms of a modification of the understanding of God's power. One could speak instead of a qualification of the concept of power by that of love. It is in this form that the point is made by another recent writer, Grace Jantzen. She writes.

> The proper order of priority in understanding the attributes of God must be to take his love as central, and modify our ideas of omnipotence in terms of it Creative love is love which gives autonomy to that which it creates, and though omnipotence can be limited by nothing else, it is limited by love If God's power is understood as the expression of his love, then God's power is his

> power to give independence, autonomy, even to creatures over whom, strictly speaking, he is sovereign [80]

Conceptually there may be disadvantages in speaking of one attribute of God having priority over another. It runs the risk of suggesting some kind of tension within the being of God Nevertheless religiously there are compensating gains in the vividness with which the main point can be conveyed. This is powerfully expressed in some words of Soren Kierkegaard:

> O wonderful omnipotence and love! A man cannot bear that his 'creations' should be something directly over against him, they should be nothing and therefore he calls them creations with contempt But God, who creates out of nothing, who almightily takes from nothing and says 'Be'' lovingly adds 'Be something even over against me' Wonderful love, even his omnipotence is under the power of love Hence the reciprocal relationship If God were only the almighty, there would be no reciprocal relation, for the creation is nothing for the Almighty But it is something for love [81]

This is the understanding of God I wish to propose in the face of Wimber's theology God is known supremely in love, not power Attempts to reassert naked omnipotence via controlling agents will inevitably lead to a distorted ontology of God, with a community surrounding it that will consequently mirror the distortion [82]

(d) The Potential Merits of Wimber's Fundamentalism

Too often in the past, the assessment of fundamentalists by theologians or social scientists have focussed exclusively on deficiencies in theology, or abuses of authority and socially corrupt organisation, and have tended to ignore or take for granted any potential merits In the case of Wimber's dynamic and sophisticated fundamentalism, the sociological and theological world so far lacks an adequate treatment of his work and works. True, favourable profiles written from a sympathetic standpoint do exist But given our own critique, what can we say in favour of Wimber's power theology? A number of preliminary points occur

Firstly, Wimber's theology of power offers a framework to believers in which allegiance and responsibility to a transcendent reality is highly magnified. By this, we mean that Wimber's focus on the immediate reality and availability of power of God in the present has the effect of bringing faith 'alive'. The expectation of believers is raised: God is no longer distant, but very present, involved in ordinary life and able to transform situations. One of the hallmarks that characterises Wimber's followers (and others involved in renewal/revivalism) is their firm belief that God will act, and that dynamic transformative power does come from God to enable a greater good to take place.

A second merit arises out of this, namely Wimber's dissatisfaction with 'traditional' or 'mainline' demoninations (and their theology) which have failed to reify God's power for worldwide witness. Whilst we may have reservations about the degree to which Wimber has understood or engaged with other denominations seriously, there can be no doubt that the signs and wonders programme has had a significant impact on the missionary life of many churches. The breadth of Wimber's appeal is partly due to his accurate diagnosis and prognosis of historical Christianity's treatment of divine power. Throughout his works he points out that many groups or movements in the past that have been especially open to revivalism or the gifts of the Holy Spirit have frequently been quashed or marginalised. In their place, the Church has often become preoccupied with its own power and programmes, and neglected the source of the life for the Church. These views are presented with ardent clarity by Wimber, and although he lacks a sophisticated and broad pneumatology, we must nevertheless commend him for his prophetic insight (although he is not the first by any means), which has identified this problem all too recurrent in modern church life, that is, dependence on ecclesiastical might, managerial or doctrinal expertise, at the expense of being open and vulnerable to the movement of God. Wimber's strong convictions in this area can be of help to the church, serving to remind it that it is an agent of a higher power, it is not to conflate its own powers with those of God, and then lose sight of the latter.

Thirdly, Wimber, along with others, has made the evangelical world from which he comes reconsider the Holy Spirit. This is not meant to sound trite. Yet Wimber's distinctive emphasis on signs and wonders has forced many evangelical churches to reconsider their doctrine of the Spirit. It would not be unfair to say that some evangelicals in the past have viewed the work of the Spirit with suspicion, begrudgingly ascribing its roles such as interpretation and inspiration, usually in connection with biblical exposition. However, Wimber's programme has forced many to rethink, as they have come face to face themselves with often dramatic phenomena that have produced both internal transformation and external results. Wimber's treatment of the Gospels and Acts has impressed many evangelicals, and made them aware that a response to a Gospel message or a conversion can arise just as easily out of signs and wonders as it can from preaching or personal witnessing

Fourthly, Wimber's use of the inductive theological method is noteworthy. In attempting to locate divine power in inductive human experience, Wimber provides believers with something that appears to be vital and relevant. The concentration on power, or more correctly, on the empowering possibilities of God, consitutes an extremely plausible, accessible and attractive apologetic. Wimber achieves this focus in part, by applying rhetoric that is contemporary and slick His language matches his theology here, jettisoning excess baggage which other Christians might prize, in order to simply focus on one or two central tenets of the faith Wimber makes them structually and linguistically comprehensible for his followers.

Lastly, Wimber advances his theological strategy in as simple a manner as possible Audio tapes and books are devoid of technical language this is not because Wimber cannot write or speak in a sophisticated manner - he can. Yet he chooses to present his version of the Gospel in this way to remind us that Christianity is simple, and to remind us of the magnitude and profundity of the simple truths it proclaims God as a loving Father, who is almighty and omnipotent, is made known in Jesus, through the work of the Holy Spirit To some extent we can account for Wimber's unwillingness to dialogue with Christians of other persuasions here. It is not that he

thinks he is beyond reproach or criticism. Rather, like so many other fundamentalists before him, his passion and vocation lie in presenting the Gospel in simple terms, and not being side-tracked into complexifications by critics which might confuse or dispirit those of no or uncertain faith. The potential merits of Wimber's fundamentalism therefore lie in his attempt to safeguard the omnipotence of God in the modern world, though at the price of limiting the grace, freedom and love of God in creation

e. Wimber and Power. Evaluation

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to suggest a comprehensive list of improvements to Wimber's theology I do wish, however, to suggest that reading his work and works in the light of a hermeneutic of power could indicate some possible directions which theology and sociology might take in dealing with the phenomena of fundamentalism So, here are some general remarks that apply to the study of fundamentalism beyond our chosen case-study

Firstly, an analysis of order and structure in fundamentalist groups or movements will always point to the location of power. Generally, this will be hierarchical, although there will be more than one type of hierarchy. For example, the elders may have power over the laity, and an inerrant Bible power over forms of worship. These hierarchies can work in harmony or competition, but communal progress takes place when power has been correctly appealed to and deployed The order and structures of a fundamantalist group are generally designed for maximum reification, which in turn, validates the authenticity of the approach

Secondly, focussing on the inherent dualism within most fundamentalist movements can reveal the agenda of a group, as well as indicating the type of power being appealed to. For example, an appeal to an inerrant text or persons tends to locate power in certainty, rather than the (perceived) powerlessness that is posited by the uncertainty of the modern situation. For Wimber, the duality between strength and weakness found in his Christology and ecclesiology informs us that Wimber equates power with strength

Thirdly, we must accept that each fundamentalist group will have a different sociology and theology of power Power is not an univocal concept, but a multiple reality Understanding how fundamentalism functions will require certain questions to be asked of the agents of power, both human and divine. For example, what text or tradition has authority here? Which person has the gift or office of charisma to

protect or interpret it? What are the common experiences of divine power that believers are expected to own if they are to be members? What is the divine power supposed to do, and to whom? How is that divine power mediated? How is it reified, and what is its effect?

As regards John Wimber, we have tried to show that he may only be properly understood when these questions are addressed. A grasp of how God the 'almighty' is known and shared by fundamentalists is the key to any successful and empathetic critique Any sociological or theological analysis of fundamentalism or fundamentalists that does not take account of the issue of power risks falling short of this ideal.

Ultimately, as with most fundamentalists, crucial theological questions are raised by Wimber's distinctive charismatic fundamentalism For example, is God all-powerful? Does he intervene dramatically, as signs and wonders testifies? Is there any limit to what God can do? We have attempted to show, in our critique of Wimber, that he is susceptible to a common problem that can be located in most forms of fundamentalism In attempting to defend the power of God via a power-centred theology, God's very being is presented in a distorted manner. Instead of God's omnipotence being an agent of his love (i e , being), his love becomes an agent of his power. To ask '<u>is</u> God almighty and omnipotent?' is to ask an ontological question Wimber's answer would be 'yes', God is the highest power. Yet Christian tradition primarily asserts that God <u>is</u> love, his all-powerfulness is an agent in the service of that being Our phenomenological investigation has revealed that Wimber's ontology - in theology and ecclesiology - puts God's love in the service of his power Orthodoxy would insist that this should be reversed

We see this distorted ontology in Wimber's Christology. In Christ, Wimber sees an act of powerful intervention initiated by God. Jesus demonstrates signs and wonders to signify the power of God. It is a mistake to take instances of 'power encounters' like the healing miracles of Jesus, and read these as though God were flexing his muscles against the powers of darkness The healing miracles of Christ were

often his particular and reflexive response of love to needy individuals. Sometimes just a word would be spoken (c f Luke 7 : 36 - 50, John 4 . 1 - 26, 8 . 1 - 11, etc.), rather than a physiological transformation engendered Where pysical healing does take place, it is often for individuals who were shunned by the prevailing religious institutions, or on the fringes of society. This could be because of the nature of their illness (e.g , leprosy, haemorrhageing, etc), or their sin (e.g., the man born blind in John 9), or their social status (e g., tax collector, gentile, servant of soldier, etc) They key to the healings in most cases is loving the unloved, blessing them in the midst of witnesses who had themselves often colluded with the alienating processes of society Sometimes, this was true even of Jesus' followers. Again, Wimber's faulty hermeneutics fails to note this Jesus seldom healed friends Nor did he locate his healing ministry in a community of faith, in order to build up his congregation, it was more usually offered to those people who were explicitly or implicitly excluded from such gatherings Christian tradition asserts that Christ is the embodiment of God's love, and not (primarily) his (brute) power or empowering capability God risks all in being embodied in Christ for the sake of love and relationship, not for power and dominance Signs and wonders are tokens of love, not power, which converge at Calvary At the cross, there are no miracles, for all the signs and wonders that went before are focussed in the cross - love risking knowing and relationship, and thus even rejection - the way into God

Postscript

Given our observations and analysis, we can tentatively go one stage further, and offer some insight into the future for Wimber and his Vineyards, in the light of the overall hermeneutic of power posited These remarks are not exhaustive, but those that follow might also hold good for other kinds of contemporary fundamentalism.

1. The type of faith that operates within fundamentalist or charismatic Christian communities is essentially private in nature What is valued most is the experience of the individual, which authenticates the inductive strategy, and affirms the faith of community One problem likely to arise from this approach is that of fragmentation or chaos Theological and sociological scholars of fundamentalist and charismatic groups are constantly having to revise their taxonomy, since experience, the ground of belief, is always shifting ' Groups splinter, reform, re-align and then splinter again, with a regularity that is traceable to the foundational inductive power strategy Wimber's churches will not be immune from these developments If he manages to maintain unity amongst Vineyards in his own lifetime, he will be the exception, not the rule. History shows us that most if not all fundamentalist/charismatic groups split during or after the passing of the first generation of leaders ?

2. Wimber's teachings and appeal will survive him Like Restorationism or Revivalism, Wimber's distinctive brand of charismatic fundamentalism has found its way into many mainline denominations, mostly via established evangelical groups that were already within Many will adopt his signs and wonders programme, as a viable means to church growth or for evangelism As such, it is not unreasonable to suppose that his theology will outlast his churches, although Vineyards may continue after his death

3. Wimber's suggestion that there has been a series of fundamental discontinuities, historical and spiritual, between the Church as it is described in the New Testament and the Church as it is today (i.e., a 'fall'), will almost certainly be challenged The inductive strategy that pursues restorationism - calling the Church back to experience the power the First Century Church knew - is always threatened by what Berger calls 'mellowness'. That is to say, there comes a point in the life of any Church when it is realised that an attempt to live the past in the present has little appeal, and risks a disengagement from reality The ultimate price to pay for this is marginalisation Wimber's Vineyards are not yet in danger of this, but neither are they immune from it The lack of good theodicy or a realistic Christology are serious problems without them, Wimber may not be able to prevent Vineyards from becomming charismatic or mystical sects, following his death

4 The insistence on the immanence of God may become hard to sustain, especially if a prolonged period of decline takes place in the Vineyard Proclaiming the Kingdom of God can itself become an agent for empowering However, if eschatology is at first over-realised, what happens when it eventually becomes manifestly clear that it is in fact unrealised? Wimber has already had to face this in a limited way the prophesised revivals for Britain have not occurred Whilst a certain amount of 'cognitive dissonance' can be tolerated by a group, too many prophecies passing their "sell-by-date" does create problems [7] It necessitates revisionism and reconstruction, and not all followers will subscribe to re-interpretation. some will leave as a direct result of promises not being fulfilled This will no doubt be due in part to the conflation that takes place between the immanence of God and the charisma of the leader As Bryan Wilson notes in The Noble Savages

> Clearly the specific prophecies of the charismatic leader normally fail, the types and ranges of illnesses that he can marculously cured are limited, the essential miracles are heard about rather than seen the expectations of his followers are always eventually disappointed [8]

5. The notion that the Church is fallen but is now being restored will prove problematic. Typically, groups that have claimed this in the past have prosecuted a new or apparently lost doctrine or programme for the Church But the programme itself is seldom as comprehensive or as diverse as the body it is dealing with - the Church. In response to negativity, inaction or scepticism, fundamentalist groups tend to emphasise holiness and discipline, in order to counter the menace of mellow liberalism But the emphasis on holiness and discipline is not without cost some within the community of believers will refuse tighter strictures, or an increase in the power of leaders Pursuing high quality discipleship often comes at the expense of quantity - of people

6 The leaders within the Vineyard will find their Apostolic and Prophetic offices hard to sustain, especially during periods of decline Generally, it was their charisma and the charismatic situation that established the basis for the office Competition from other groups, even similar ones, tends to increase choice, break monopolies, and ultimately dissipate the power of leaders. This process has already begun for Wimber once the major exponent of signs and wonders, he now finds himself relativised as just one of many fundamentalists operating in the revivalist tradition

7 Wimber's distinctive power-centred emphasis will lose its lustre The agenda of signs and wonders, the role of powerful prophets and the function of dynamic praise in Wimber's thinking are intended to produce two major occurrences. Firstly, the believer feels closer to God, and experiences God's power as of old Secondly, the Church grows numerically as a result of witnessing such occurrences. There will come a point however, when some believers no longer have faith in these programmes Anything from dissatisfaction with results to weariness with quasi-immanence may produce this crisis of confidence At that point, some may begin to question whether God really does meet us in and through power, or whether he has

temporarily abdicated omnipotence, and only meets us in His love, this alone being the means of our empowerment.[6]

NOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

Section (a)

1. On this, see P. Berger, The Heretical Imperative, pp.153ff, and Robert Towler, The Need for Certainty, Routledge, Kegan & Paul, London, 1984.
2. The wrath of God is something Wimber hardly mentions at all in his writings, yet his evangelical background makes it unthinkable that he has not, at some stage, been exposed to this notion. Some evidence of exposure is traceable in his renderings of the doctrine of Penal Substitution (or Substitionary Atonement), which compete with his more dynamic theory of the Cross, in which Satan loses his power over creation at the very point when he thinks he has gained it.

Section (b)

1. See Nigel Wright, Themelios, October/November 1991, vol.17, no.1, p.20: Another major concern is "...the nature of religious experience and specifically the interface between the spiritual and the psychic. This is yet an inadequately explored area, but is profoundly suggested by the entire Wimber phenomenon." See also Morton T. Kelsey, The Christian and the Supernatural, London, Search Press, 1977, and N.Wright, The Fair Face of Evil, Marshall Pickering, London, 1989, pp.115-123.
2. For example, Origen's much-quoted maxim that 'you cannot pray for the cool of the winter in the heat of Summer' fails to impress some believers. I recently interviewed a follower of Wimber, who patiently explained to me that if enough people wished for winter conditions in summer, then those conditions would be available and present. In his view, the only thing that prevented this happeneing was the desire of the majority to have a warm summer. God would change the ordering of seasons if enough prayerful people demanded it.
3. See for example Power Points, SWCG I & II, etc.

Section (c)

1. Many of Wimber's followers read the text, "You shall do greater things than I" (John 14:12) literally. For some, this is an indication that newer and more spectacular occurrences may be expected in the Vineyard and beyond.
2. See Songs of the Vineyard II, numbers 28 and 42.
3. The emphasis on the Old Tesatament is most interesting, and mirrors a trend that can be located in Restorationism. The desire to return the Church to the experience of the First Century has a number of consequences: (i) The Old Testament itself takes a higher profile in forming the life

of the community, (ii) the 'tribalism' of some parts of the OT is considered attractive, providing a rationale for being separate from society and occasionally waging war against elements of it, and (iii) believers attempt to copy what they perceive to be OT patterns of worship, including using Jewish rhythms for songs. (In fact, those rhythms almost certainly do not predate 1800). For a fuller account, see The Use of the Old Testament in House Churches, Grove Booklet no.48, Bramcote, Nottingham.

4. J. Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit, SCM Press, London, 1977, p.20.
5. J. Begbie, 'The Spirituality of Renewal Music', Anvil, vol.8., no.3, 1991, pp.227ff.
6. See G. von Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1967, Volume 1, pp.491-2.
7. See D. Hardy and D. Ford, Jubilate, p.80.
8. T. Smail, 'The Love of Power and the Power of Love', Anvil, vol.6.,no.3.,1989, pp.223ff.
9. e.g., John 12:31.
10. For example, some of Wimber's followers and colleagues (e.g., Colin Urquhart) assert that Jesus 'never had a day of sickness in his life: if he didn't, neither should you!' Whilst it is true that the Gospels do not record Jesus ever having a bout of 'flu, there are problems with this view. For example, he did suffer and die. Further still, if Jesus' humanity was real, how would he have made antibodies to combat the common sicknesses of his day without ever having been ill?
11. Smail, 'The Love of Power', p.227.
12. Ibid., p.228.
13. SWCG I, section 5, p.12.
14. Ibid., p.12.
15. Interview with Alan Ecclestone, Church Times, June 26, 1992, p.8.
16. Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit, p.20.
17. Ibid., p.300.
18. D. Hardy & D. Ford, Jubilate, p.148.
19. Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit, p.27. See also Hans Kung, The Church, Burns & Oates, London, 1967, p.95.
20. See The Kingdom of God in the Last Days.
21. Ibid.
22. See J. Begbie, 'The Spirituality of Renewal Music', p.236.
23. Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit, p.93.
24. Smail, 'The love of Power and the Power of Love', p.229.
25. For example, communities like L'Arche in France, pioneered by Jean Vanier, Charnwood in England, or the work and writings of Henri Nouwen.
26. D. Hardy & D. Ford, Jubilate, p.51.
27. J. Begbie, 'The Spirituality of Renewal Music', p.237.
28. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics II/1, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1957, p.587.
29. T.F. Tracy, God, Action, and Embodiment, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans. 1984, pp.143-44.

30. G.M. Jantzen, God's World, God's Body, London, DLT, 1984, p.152.
31. S. Kierkegaard, Christian Discourses (tr. W. Lowrie), Oxford, OUP, 1959, p.132.
32. For further discussion, see M. Wiles, God's Action in the World, London, SCM, 1986, pp.22-25.

Postscript

1. Andrew Walker, quoted in Christianity Today, May 18, 1992, pp.27ff. (This is an extensive article on American Restorationism and its pervasiveness).
2. See J. MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1992.
3. Readers interested in cognitive dissonance, the term used to describe the social, psychological and theological mechanisms that a group or individual uses to cope with 'unrealised' prophecies, are referred to the work of Leon Festinger: When Prophecy Fails: A Social and Psychological Study of a Modern Groups that Predicted the Destruction of the World, New York, Harper and Row, 1956, and A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1957, are both exemplary introductions.
4. B. Wilson, The Noble Savages: An Essay on Charisma- The Rehabilitation of a Concept, Berkeley, University of California Press (Quantum Books), 1975, p.93.
5. The abdication is of course, temporary. The experience of the fullness of God's power can be affirmed as a future event, or, eschatalogically. Alternatively, omnipotence can be redefined, along the lines suggested by Christoph Schwoebel in God: Action and Revelation, Pharos, Kampen, The Netherlands, 1992, p.31: 'God maintains the world in its created structures and freely limits the exercise of divine omnipotence in respecting the existence and structure of creation.'

CONCLUSION

THE THEME OF POWER AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH INTO OTHER FORMS OF CONTEMPORARY FUNDAMENTALISM

In the recent volume Fundamentalisms Observed (Eds. Martin Marty and Scott Appleby 1992), the editors observe that 'the task of understanding fundamentalisms is urgent at a time when these movements are so frequently catalysts in an unsettled world.' The plural form of the key word in the book's title reminds us that fundamentalism is a diverse and dynamic phenomenon that is not easily reducible to a single set of guiding principles. Therefore, we must proceed with some caution here, if we are to suggest that the theme of power might somehow illuminate the study of different types of fundamentalism. So, let us begin by making some general remarks about fundamentalism.

We began our thesis by advancing a definition of fundamentalism that was designed to do justice to its contemporary, multifarious nature. Amongst our suggestions was that fundamentalism was 'backward-looking' (for legitimation), gained some of its identity from negativity, namely existing in opposition to modernist and pluralist trends, and was a 'habit of the heart' or mind, sometimes specifically located to an individual doctrine. The sum of our definition was to point to fundamentalism offering adherents a 'complete world-view' in the form of a cultural-linguistic system (Lindbeck), that is funded via an inductive theological strategy. So, the context in which fundamentalism operates is one of competing powers. Fundamentalists resist modernity (an attitude where tradition and/or its authority is challenged), which threatens the basis of their power. Equally, they must fight for supremacy amidst an obvious plurality of beliefs. If it is true that the common beliefs or fundaments of society that once held it together have been eroded, then what was once implicit now needs to be made explicit, in order to compete effectively. This is the world in which fundamentalists currently find themselves, as they struggle to reassert

their particular view of the power of God, in the face of competing convictions.[2]

We must also draw attention to the difficulty of differentiating between divine and human power, and divine and human agency. Apart from the power of God, we have shown that power is a function of social interaction, and one of the most important means of social organisation. Agency and the source of empowerment are frequently confused and conflated in fundamentalist polity: charisma, worship, inerrancy and fundaments are notable foci for such problems. We must say, however, that we are not the first to note this problem, although our assessment of it in the light of the theme of power is original. Kathleen Boone, for example, implicitly makes the point in her The Bible Tells Them So (1990). She correctly points out that (ideally) in fundamentalist groups, the Bible is regarded as a divine agent ('God-given'), and is therefore inerrant, the interpreter is, however, a human agent, subject to the divine. She then goes on to show how these two agents are actually confused and conflated in such groups, so that it is the interpreter who becomes preeminent. In this thesis, we have noted the confusion in key areas of Wimber's work, and have acknowledged that all agents basically have the same function: to reify divine power, or human power that will lead to an encounter with the divine. But there is a deeper purpose at work in reifying power via agents: it delivers a degree of certainty, and, ultimately, control. How is this so?

We have already suggested that one of the main benefits arising from an inductive strategy is certainty for the believers. We must note, however, the ambiguous relationship between authority and certainty. Certainty does, in fact, have an authority of its own: it demands allegiance, and issues control to those who propogate it.[3] Some caution needs to be exercised here; we certainly do not want to suggest that fundamentalism is simply reducible to a phenomenology of control. However, if anything is at the centre of the reticulate power framework, then control of that power is probably a fair suggestion. To communicate, distribute and mediate power requires control, especially in a network as dispersed as the Vineyards: centralist or core stories

and ideologies are essential, if the expanding network is to speak the same language and hold together. The control needed in social relations for fundamentalists is mirrored in their doctrine of God. Omnipotence is a controlling power that competes with freedom, and can manipulate: the love of God is ultimately an agent of that power in this view. But, we hold that orthodoxy suggests a different picture. Omnipotence is an agent of the being of God (love), not in the sense of control, but in the sense that the capacity for God to be fully willed in creation remains, but without being a controlling, manipulative power. In other words, creation may become fully what it is intended to be, through loving co-operation with God rather than a naked assertion of power and control that denies freedom.

The suggestions above can be illustrated more simply if one looks at how truth is sometimes held by groups. For example, in the debate over the priesting of women in the Church of England, an alliance developed between Anglo-Catholics and Conservative Evangelicals. Generally, they have little in common. However, on the issue of women priests or women in authority, they can unite. This is because they can agree about the controlling nature of revealed truth, (although not about its substance.). Both groups see the nature of truth as something unalterable, which is passed down from one generation to the next, or, if you prefer, like a baton in a relay race, passed from one man to the next. (And it would usually have to be a man). The issue of control - keep women away from power - can be agreed upon in principle, although the two groups arrive at their conclusions from (and for) quite different reasons and presuppositions. The point of dealing with truth in this way is that fundamentalists like their truth to have the same amount of control and power as (it is said) it originally had. The inductive theological strategy is therefore an excellent mechanism for accessing that power, and, ultimately, issuing control from it.[4]

Given these remarks, however, we must ask what happens when power fails for fundamentalists, control is lost, and the forces of modernity and liberalism seem to have the upper hand? The more usual responses under such circumstances bear out part of our thesis. Power is appealed to again, reasserted afresh, and the controlling network reorganised to hold that power. We can illustrate this by focussing on some of the Catholic groups who protested against the Church of England General Synod's decision to ordain women to the priesthood. The ultra-conservative Catholic group 'Ecclesia' resorted to rhetoric punctuated by violent "Holy War" metaphors and images; talk of love, understanding and reconciliation was completely absent.[6] Or, we can listen to the rhetoric of fundamentalist-charismatic Benny Hinn, following some (scholarly) undermining of his pneumatology:

> Now I'm pointing my finger with the mighty power of God on me ... You hear this. There are men and women attacking me. I will tell you something under the anointing now, you'll reap it in your children. You'll never win ... And your children will suffer ... you'll pay, and your children will. Hear this from the lips of God's servant. You are in danger. Repent, or God Almighty will move his hand ...[7]

These two examples show, amongst other things, that a violent reassertion of power is often threatened by fundamentalist groups, and specifically against those who might have caused the 'power failure'. The power of God is appealed to, instead of his love. Love, by definition (1 Corinthians 13), gives freedom to respond, and does not seek to control. But if fundamentalists perceive that their control has been damaged, it is a reassertion of power rather than a commitment to love that will manifest itself. Ultimately, fundamentalists are guilty of loving the power of controlling truths more than the people they are supposed to serve.[7] Their commitment to a God of power always precedes that of a commitment to a God of love, and its consequent social, ecclesial and theological implications.

So, in the light of the theme of power fundamentalism can be understood as a concentration of power, both in ecclesiology and theology. This is often read as sectarianism by sociologists, or as wilful religious naivete or bigotry by theologians. In fact, when one considers one of the main tasks of fundamentalism - defending omnipotence in the face of modernity - the phenomenon is better read as 'power concentrated for a particular task'. Quite often, this task can be defined as 'fighting', which requires the concentration of energy, resources, strategy and a degree of singlemindedness. Fundamentalists fight back (against modernity), fight for (a traditional worldview), fight with (doctrines or 'fundaments'), fight against ('the agents of assault on what they hold dear'), and fight under (God, or their 'sign of transcendent reference').[5]

'Concentration of power' is a key phrase here. It implies that fundamentalism is not so much about the beliefs themselves as it is about the manner in which they are held. The word 'concentrate' also relates to other words that are traditionally associated with fundamentalist belief: essence, extract and strength, to name but a few. 'Concentration' also denotes a body with a definitive size and shape, that is distinct from other essences. A good example of how fundamentalism is a concentration of power can be seen when one observes certain Protestant 'Bible-believers'. Although a minority within Christianity, they gain their identity by concentrating on a very small number of essentials, which empower their community. The group of true believers, however, diminishes in proportion to the definitiveness (i.e. level of concentration) and certainty which are claimed for beliefs. To many this is unsurprising, since the more you insist on concentration, the more room there is for dissipation and distraction.

We can also correctly restate one of our major arguments in this thesis, namely that fundamentalism is an inductive theological strategy, designed to recover an empowering experience from the past in the present. There is a sense in which contemporary fundamentalism is a relatively new movement that emerged in reaction to modernity. In nearly all its forms, it claims to go back to scripture for guidance in

the present. It tends to disregard the authority of tradition or scholarship, relying instead on some charismatic leader who claims and exemplifies direct insight into the original meaning/power of the text. In the opinion and experience of fundamentalists, tradition and authority have often failed to protect belief from the vagaries of modernity. Consequently, fundamentalists frequently submit themselves wholly to some individual's interpretation, and even appeal to it to criticize tradition. So, divine and human power are highly concentrated in fundamentalist movements, and can be accessed by believers via an inductive framework.

Lastly, fundamentalism is <u>assertive</u> or counter-assertive in the modern age. It is the true power resisting all others:

> fundamentalist movements are final desparate attempts to assert the primacy of one cultural tradition ... They [fundamentalists] see the basic modern religious conflict as one between an ancient and irreformable truth, embodied in one cultural framework, and destructive forces of secularism and materialism, which must be resisted by a return to the old absolute values.[9]

The use of the word 'assertive' implies that there are claims to be made in fundamentalism. Certainly, this is the case. But those claims are only made in order to receive power, to defend it, and ultimately, to re-impose it, on a society that is deemed to have 'sold out' to other powers which are corrupt. In its assertiveness, fundamentalists are appealing not just to a set of abstract claims, but rather to the empowering possibilities of those claims, which will realign the believer's life via an experience of the ultimate power: God.

Attention to where and how power is concentrated, by what means it is reified (inductively), and how it is mediated (asserted) in fundamentalist communities has been posited as a key to understanding the phenomenon more empathetically. We have shown that charisma, scriptures, experiences and prophets can all be agents of empowerment, and that that empowerment is focussed on re-asserting the omnipotence of God in the modern situation. That is all very well for Wimber, who

'fits' the methodology chosen. But how might the theme of power enrich the study of other types of fundamentalism? I want to suggest three possibilities, although this cannot be an exhaustive account. We shall consider the theme of power as an hermeneutic, divine power, and human power.

1. Power. The Theme

Many theories of power have, in the past, concentrated on the location or use of power. Theorists have examined the stabilising or obligatory 'passage points' within an organisation, and have assessed how much 'domination' or 'legitimation' takes place.[10] In a word, power was treated as a force, which could be directed to certain ends. One consequence of choosing to interpret a particular type of fundamentalism using the theme of power, has been to show that the operation of power is very diverse, just as fundamentalism is itself. Neither can be reduced to a simple, brute equation. What has been proposed is more sophisticated, and does justice to the rich complexity of fundamentalist belief and behaviour, namely, that power has an inter-relational quality about it, and can only be understood properly by referring to the operating agents or nodes that reify, receive, transfer, transform and communicate power. Fundamentalism is a belief system that can be interpreted, whose encompassing framework is fixed by power in a particular way, namely, inductively.[11]

This broad thesis can illuminate the study of other types of fundamentalism, that at first sight, appear to be very remote from our case-study. For example, those organisations presently engaged in campaigning against the ordination of women to the Priesthood in the Church of England can, in some respects, be better understood if the theme of power is used as an interpretative shchema. In a very ordinary sense, we can see that power is already deemed to be present in an all-male Priesthood, and opening Priesthood to women would dilute or destroy that power, which is variously labelled: 'apostolic succession', 'headship', 'revealed', 'tradition', and so on. God's omnipresence is limited. true priestly power may only come through male agents. The

pattern for this is arrived at via an inductive strategy: Jesus, a male, and now High Priest, was and is a reification of God's power in a particular form. If the Church wishes to hold on to or recover its original empowering, the all-male priestly agency must be upheld.

Now, clearly there are many more sophisticated arguments used to endorse this line of thinking, and we must not make light of them. However, the trenchant defence of an all-male Priesthood is clearly a power issue that has implications for who God is, what he/she/it can do, and what the Church should do as a consequence. The ideological agents also reveal much. 'ideal' women are mothers and servants, 'ideal' men, Priests/presidents and 'Fatherly', a metaphor that conflates the identity of the Priest with God's. In our view, to try to interpret such organisations in the light of their stance on, say, tradition, would be to miss the point. The controlling issue is power, and the 'power framework' that has been constructed - 'tradition', 'scripture' and 'relations with Rome' - are tools, or rather agents of the power that are constantly being sought inductively. So, what is at issue in this type of fundamentalism is the essential agency of maleness as a means of reifying a particular divine power. God's self-revelation in the male Christ is invested with particular significance (but not his Jewishness) which in turn demands and protects an all-male Priesthood. In the eyes of those who believe this, women Priests represent a threat to the very power of God. they might pollute it or dilute it. Ultimately, only secession will guarantee the purity of their power. This is highly ironic: those claiming to be 'Catholic' actually start to become sectarian in nature, withdrawing from society in order to protect the omnipotence of God. Yet we should not be surprised at this. The theme of power in this case, shows that the professed 'Catholicity' is in fact bogus, it is an agent of power for the present. If that agent fails to function, it will be cut out of the framework, or, be reinterpreted in a different light.[12]

2. Divine Power

One of the allegations we have made in this thesis is that fundamentalism is an attempt to hold on to omnipotence in the modern age, in a particular style and form. That 'power' is central to both religious experience and to human ideas about God is undeniable. Rudolf Otto described the power of God (numinous - the 'mysterium tremendum') as a power that is quite unlike anything found in the natural order of things. Gerardus van der Leeuw, amongst others, confirms this, arguing that religion in its essence and manifestation consists in 'being touched by power', 'being effected by power', 'conducting oneself in relation to power', and 'participating in power'.'[3] Power is the predominant concept when we examine animism, polytheism and fundamentalism.

Fundamentalists are particularly interested in omnipotence, since omnipotence guarantees control. Of course, that control ultimately lies in the mystery of God. Yet fundamentalists are firmly convinced of the existence of 'fixed points of passage' (Clegg) through which this control, order and power ultimately passes. For many fundamentalists, this is an inerrant text, teacher or tradition, which with each subscribing believer, must be experienced, if divine power is to be reified in their lives. In wider society, the concept of omnipotence tends to reflect the desires of the group for those beyond their fold. God's omnipotence becomes a framework that is ultimately to be imposed on society, which will have to submit to the new powers. If the fixed points of passage for omnipotence are interfered with in any way, this naturally poses a threat to God, the group's agenda, and all the operating control mechanisms.

What is particularly at issue here is the nature of God's power. We have argued in our Conclusion that the fundamentalist defence of omnipotence gives rise to a distorted ecclesiology and theology, which tends to focus on how God distributes power, and how it might be controlled and reified. Even the most sophisticated attempts to define

God's power in relation to Christology and 'divine self-limitation', still tend to place God in total control, reinforcing notions of almightiness in weakness, and so on,'[14] Yet, contrary to what many fundamentalists assert, the primary being of God is love, not power: all powers are subordinate to his nature, which is love. God approaches creation in love, risking compromise, rejection and defeat.

For fundamentalists, two 'hallmarks' arise directly out of their distorted ontology. The first must be generalised to some extent, but can still be recognised as distinctive: it is the fear of 'embodiment'. This fear can take a number of forms. For some fundamentalists, the idea of Jesus as incarnate is notionally satisfactory, since it is partly by this means that they themselves can be empowered. Yet many fundamentalists who claim to affirm the incarnation will not countenance Jesus ever being ill, having sexual desires, being confused at times, or even making a mistake. For other fundamentalists, their own embodiment presents a problem. In order to reify God's power as purely as possible, an assortment of channels that God's power migh come through are ruled out. For example, some Roman Catholics, Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses share a common belief that it is wrong to interfere with the 'natural function' of the body. The use of contraceptives, asprin and blood transfusions are deemed to be contrary to God's will, since this might prevent the power of God being properly embodied in that person. The power of God therefore becomes something that can 'flow' through natural functions, but is distorted, and perhaps not even present, in 'artificial' ones.

A second hallmark is a hierarchy in divine power. Fundamentalists believe that divine power does and can control. So, they are always seeking a controlling person or doctrine, both in the life of God and in social relations. In some respects, the controlling 'mechanism' that characterises the power framework can almost be anything: the maleness of God, the inerrant word, being 'born again'. Any one of these concepts can be used as an agent of power and control. Yet it is in the life of God that we must especially note that fundamentalists construct a hierarchy. In Oneness Pentecostalism it is Jesus who is the

principal, controlling person. In certain types of charismatic renewal, it is the Spirit and the Father. In some forms of conservative evangelicalism, it is God revealing himself in the word (i.e., Bible), that is principal, with the Spirit's role reduced to that of a biblical interpreter. Any notion of the persons of God in an open, mutual relationship is absent.

3. Human Power

Our phenomenological approach to fundamentalism has shown, with reference to the case-study, that power is what forms the basis for individual and communal relations, and not love. That is not to say that love has no place in fundamentalist communities: it does. But the primary preoccupation of fundamentalists is with protecting the power of God against other powers. If this is the case, we cannot be surprised that fundamentalists are often accused of being 'sectarian'. Total protection requires vigilance, security, and isolation of the object from any potential threats. The necessity of protecting the source of power for a given group is an important point. Often, the source of power is a 'still point' for a community, around which other things may change, yet the power itself remaining undiminished. Human power can only properly access that power by having 'fixed and obligatory passage points' that reflect the fixedness and essential nature of the power source. In terms of human institutions, this tends to place power over love. Although love is valued, power is valued more highly, since it is constant. love can compromise, change, and does not always insist on its own way. However, power, as a basis for community, runs no such risks.

Traces of this trend within fundamentalist groups occur with alarming frequency. Differences of opinion are rarely countenanced; doctrine is often placed above unity (in spite of what some in the 'Anti-woman Priest' movements seem to be saying); hierarchies, schisms and egalitarian claims are common. To the outsider, such problems might appear to be trivial. Yet they are far from that. Each occurrence is a direct consequence of the 'base' upon which fundamentalist communities are built. Choosing the apparent 'rock' of power and certainty, it is

not usually recognised that certainties have a habit of developing a 'sand-like' quality, especially in the context of modernity and plurality.[15]

In considering the operation of human power within fundamentalist groups, certainty is a key concept. The positing of fundamentals and their efficacy depends on their certainty. This can be theoretical, practical, pragmatic, or even 'mystical' certainty. But what does certainty look like? There is no one answer to this; but, for fundamentalists, certainty is either something that is done to truth, or a quality that is discerned within it. Fundamentalists, in all their diverse dynamism, tend to 'pin down' truth - even a new truth - and then hold it in such a way that it becomes still and fixed: from this position, fixed passage points for divine power are established. Believers can then be held to those fixed points. The truth is not free to move, change or develop. it is fixed, and, ultimately, actually controllable to some extent. In reflecting on this, one cannot help noting that Jesus met his death this way, because of some people's attitude to truth and certainty. There is a case for saying that Christ, dynamic, free truth, embodied in a human being, who left few rules and wrote only in the sand, is literally pinned down on some planks of wood. In fact, there is no certainty, and nor can there be. For it is a familiar fact of experience that the only things of which we can be certain are those which do not affect the human heart at all. Fundamentalism, in its power-centricity, often attempts to bypass this ambiguity, and establish its certainty and power <u>independent</u> of humanity. This is part of the appeal of fundamentalism, as well as its intrinsic weakness. to those who possess the truth, it is all; to those who do not, it is a distant puzzle.[16]

Of course, certainty as a fixed point for reifying power does not exist for its own sake. It is present for many different reasons. However, the primary, and perhaps most obvious reason, is that certainty results from the desire to see order, especially in the face of the turbulence generated by the modern situation. As we have noted before, fundamentalist communities are seldom static; there is always a delicate

balance between the desire for stability and the desire for change. In Wimber's case, we noted that signs and wonders fulfills this obligation, providing both a dynamic programme as well as an agreed theological core that is essentially unchanging. Other fundamentalist groups behave similarly, offering a form or type of order that is essentially fixed, which affords a secure basis of empowerment for subscribing believers. Certitude is the absence of doubt, and, as such, is an ideal channel for power, since dissipation is rarely if ever risked.

That certainty and power are intimately linked in fundamentalist communities cannot be denied. Even a cursory glance at a fundamentalist group or trend illustrates this. For example, a belief in a faultless Bible is ultimately untenable. But the <u>function</u> of an 'inerrant scripture' is to provide a power base in a community that in this case comes through a particular and certain fixed point. An inerrant text, teacher or tradition is a means of asserting power where there is a perceived vacuum, here, certitude replaces faith. Indeed, we may say that certainty is as different from faith as power from love. Faith as an act implies a continuous journey of aspiration;[17] it is concerned with a vision of the truth which has constantly to be reviewed, renewed and striven towards and held on to, it is never beyond doubt, yet neither is it firmly in one's grasp.[18] Certainty and power however, are concerned with attainment. Doubt, a necessary part of faith, has no place in assertive certitude. As such, certitude 'overshoots faith, craving for sureness'. Instead of a flexible vision, there is a blueprint or programme.[19]

<u>Summary</u>

In Chapter Two, we asked one of the more fundamental questions that faces Christianity in the modern world, namely, how does God exercise his power, and what kind of power is it that is revealed? We have shown that Wimber's answer to this question, which we hold is generic for other fundamentalists, is that God's power is Almighty, God is omnipotent (in a particular kind of way), and that there are established divine and human agencies that can show this to be the case. Certainly,

in Wimber's case, miracles, signs and wonders are said to be irresistible evidence of God's being. In this theology, a miracle is thought of as, so to speak, a 'localized and controlled explosion' of controlling power.[20] The miracle becomes the principal indicator of God's existence, and of the kind of power exercised - one that is irresistible and irrefutable. The sociological manifestations that arise out of this theology are, at least in part, what gives fundamentalism its control and power over believers.

But elsewhere, we have also hinted that this view of power is deeply corrupt. Christianity does not centre itself on a 'God of knock-down power', but on a 'creative servant God of invincible love'.[21] Yet because of the fear of the ambiguity of freedom and love, fundamentalism feeds on the mentality that wants a God of all-controlling-power. So, religions are constructed that do exactly what Freud, Marx and Durkheim say they do - meet our psychological needs, support vested interests, and provide patterns of bonding and control that can operate in society. Wimber's basic error is to see signs and wonders as evidence of God's assertive control and power whereas, we see miracles as evidence of love committed to the world, and to bringing that world into a sharing of God's creativity and love. To put it another way:

> Miracles are part of encountering the openness and presence of God within the textures, structures and activities of the created world. They are produced and experienced by means of the space which is kept open or made open, in that world by the intercourse of God with free and searching persons ... an authentic and genuinely revelatory miracle is always a mysterious combination of active faith along with a sense of, and conviction about, a gift which goes beyond the ordinary. There is always a way of interpreting or explaining a 'miracle' which does not oblige anyone to attribute it to God ... God does not force himself on people. He offers himself to us for our response, obedience and collaboration.[22]

Miracles, of course, can and do evoke faith, even deep faith; but they do not compel faith. They are <u>gifts</u>, and therefore not intended as objective agents that will pressurise people into faith. They are not so because faith is not like that, and neither is God. Miracles are not proof of power, to be replicated today. They are gifts of love to be

received by faith, as part of that same love that is poured out in Jesus Christ.[23]

The overvaluing of power at the expense of love is a major problem in fundamentalism, and leads to distorted theology and ecclesiology. Ultimately, it leads to a quest for agents that will deliver certainty and control of that power. We have noted how 'knowledge' or rather, the experience of knowledge, often fulfills that function of power, guaranteeing to the body of believers a degree of security that no longer requires further searching. Yet we must agree with the author of the fourteenth century Cloud of Unknowing, who states that 'by love God may be gotten and holden, but by thought and understanding never.'[24] Fundamentalists ultimately seek concrete faith through propositions, which are validated inductively. This is in contrast to a God who reveals himself relationally, not only in Jesus (the Word, or proposition, made flesh), but also in the dynamic particularity of the economic trinity. It is in the trinity that one must locate the ground and being of God, divine agency, action, and relation to the world.[25] Such a view does not lead to certainty about God and his relation to the world. But it does invite a free and loving response, and the beginnings of faith.

Ultimately the quest for authority, control and certainty within fundamentalist groups must be understood in its proper context. It is a search for a way of receiving, holding and reifying divine power, against any other prevailing powers that pose a threat. Yet there are at least three problems with the inductive theological strategy that is deployed by fundamentalists, and in concluding, we should mention them: the problem of 'false' religious experience; the problem of the status of one's preferred historical tradition; and the problem of certainty.

The problem of 'false' religious experience is not new to fundamentalists. An exclusive claim on God requires the denial of other groups who might claim the same, yet be different. Equally, groups that are very similar yet 'not of the fold' sometimes require an even stronger rebuttal. For example, in our case-study, it is interesting to

note that the most vilified religious group is the 'New Age Movement'. This can only be because the experiences and practice of Wimber's followers are so similar in many instances, that a very sharp distinction has to be drawn.[26] (Fundamentalists with a more Scriptural orientation tend to vilify their nearest neighbours too. Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and others, are taken to task over their interpretation of texts and the experiences this should lead to.) Clearly, if the inductive stategy is seeking the original, empowering experience or text, those who have travelled a different route need treating with caution, or eventually falsifying.

Then there is the problem of the chosen historical basis for the fundaments. Inevitably, a degree of relativity is implied in selecting some texts as important over others, some traditions as more valuable that most. Of course, practitioners of the inductive model justify their selectivity on the basis that they are pursuing the essence of Christianity. So, signs and wonders as a means to church growth, and more besides, can be said by subscribers to be preeminent. However, the strategy is always open to counter claims. It is at the mercy of other groups who suggest different essentials, or seek to reify God's power via an emphasis on a differing essence.

Thirdly, every inductive model has to confront the problem of certainty. Particularly in the case of fundamentalists, certitude is so often bound up with the charisma of the chief exponent. During their life, they are a primary source of information for followers, after their death, they become a subject for interpretation. At this point, certitude can often become a rather shaky commodity. The rich irony for fundamentalists is that the inductive strategy, used to 'prove' the power of God, is in fact highly susceptible to the relativity of modern times.[27] This problem will ensure that fundamentalism continues to be a dynamic, restless force in the future, as it struggles for the pure, empowering essence of early Christianity, a greater experience of divine power, and a certainty of that power that will convince the world.

CONCLUSION: ENDNOTES

1. Fundamentalisms Observed, Eds. Martin Marty & R. Scott Appleby, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1992, from the preface.
2. Ironically, the doctrines of biblical inerrancy and Papal infallibility arose, historically speaking, at about the same time. Both must be seen as attempts to reassert perfect divine agents in a world that was beginning to be dominated by some of the conditions of modernity.
3. See R. Towler, The Need for Certainty, London, Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1984, for a fuller discussion.
4. For two perspectives on this from different theological traditions, see T. Wright, The New Testament and the People of God, London, SPCK, 1992, and H. Walton, 'An Abuse of Power 2: A Polemic Concerning the Priests of God and the Ministers of Religion', in Modern Churchman, New Series, Vol.xxxiv, no.2., pp.21ff.
5. Interview on BBC Radio 4 'Sunday Programme' with Fr.Francis Bown, leader of ECCLESIA, 22nd November, 1992.
6. Benny Hinn, quoted in Christianity Today, October 15th, 1992, following an address to an audience at Melodyland Christian Center, Southern California. Hinn's rhetoric is similar to that of Paul Cain, who promised divine retribution for anyone who opposed the ministry of Wimber or himself.
7. In a slightly different way, S.T. Coleridge was alive to the dangers of putting doctrines of God before the very being of God. In Aids to Reflection (London, Taylor & Hessey, 1825, p.101), he writes: 'He who begins by loving Christianity [by which he meant its tradition or fundaments] better than truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity and end in loving himself better than all'.
8. Marty & Apple, Fundamentalisms Observed, pp.1.ff.
9. Keith Ward, A Vision to Pursue, London, SCM, 1992, p.206.
10. Stewart Clegg, Frameworks of Power, 1989, p.273.
11. Ibid., p.274.
12. Keeping women in their place (i.e., submissive), and men in their's (i.e., one of headship or authority), is a common though not universal feature of Christian fundamentalism. Wimber has no female prophets, apostles or pastors to my knowledge. Although I have not heard him explicitly teach that women should not be allowed to hold authority or teach, women do seem to be conspicuous by their absence in leadership roles. Of course, women are encouraged to be 'supportive', and there is evidence that some in the Vineyard are now hoping to 'release women into ministry', although I'm unclear as to who or what they are being set free from. See Women After God's Heart, Carol Wimber and Penny Fulton, VMI publishing. A wider perspective on women's

experience within fundamentalism can be gained from reading Gita Saghal & Nira Yuval-Davis (Eds.), Refusing Holy Orders: Women and Fundamentalism in Britain, London, Virago, 1992.
13. Gerardus van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation, Gloucester, Peter Smith Publishers, 1967, 1:191.
14. e.g., K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, II, i, p.294.
15. I am indebted to Anthony Thiselton for this insight. Responding to critiques of We Believe in the Holy Spirit (CIO, London, 1989) from fundamentalist charismatics, he noted that, 'many of the texts appealed to by some groups simply cannot bear the weight that is placed upon them'. In other words, if too much stress is placed on a proof-text or fundament, it tends to crumble. A more developed perspective on this trend is available in Philip S. Lee's Against the Protestant Gnostics, OUP, Oxford, 1989. Lee argues that Christianity, especially in the fundamentalist-revivalist traditions of the twentieth century, has tried to move from faith to gnosis (i.e., 'certainty...inner knowledge or "fact"'.) as the basis for their faith.
16. Robert Towler, The Need for Certainty, London, Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1984, p.100.
17. Ibid., p.100-101.
18. Or, put more eloquently by A.J.Balfour in The Foundations of Belief: 'Our highest truths are but half-truths. Think not to settle down for ever in any truth, but make use of it as a tent in which to pass a summer's night. But build no house of it, or it will be your tomb. When you first have an inkling of its insufficiency and begin to discern a dim counter-truth looming up beyond, then weep not, but give thanks. It is the Lord's voice whispering, "Take up thy bed, and walk".'
19. R. Towler, p.107. Another way of tackling this issue would be to ask whether the nature of Christian truth is primarily intended to be propositional or relational. A.L. McFadyen, in his (unpublished) paper delivered to the Society for the Study of Theology (Cambridge, 1991), argued that Christians believe Christ is the preeminent embodied form of Truth. Consequently, like Christ, truth is always with us, yet ahead of us; known, yet not known fully.
20. D. Jenkins, God, Miracle and the Church of England, London, SCM Press, 1987, p.28.
21. Ibid., p.29.
22. Ibid., p.30.
23. Ibid., pp.31ff.
24. The Cloud of Unknowing, from the British Museum MS, with an Introduction by Evelyn Underhill, 5th edition, London, John Watkins Publications, 1950, p.77.
25. See Christoph Schwoebel, God: Action and Revelation, Kampen, The Netherlands, Pharos Books, 1992, p.43: 'By demonstrating the internal relationship of the three types of action our proposal can account for the critical and constructive intention of the conception of the economic Trinity to assert the action of Father, Son and Spirit in

creation, reconciliation and salvation as the action of the same God'.

26. c.f. Equipping the Saints, vol.3, no.3, Summer 1989. Yet we must ask here, what is the difference between what some New Age healers practice, when compared to Wimber and Cain's talk of 'feeling electricity', 'auras', 'waves', 'seeing coloured lights over people, indicating conditions', and so on? Some recent general theological writing has touched on the relationship between the New Age and Charismatic Fundamentalism, and exposed the common ground with some sharpness. For example, Keith Ward (A Vision to Pursue), describes charismatic fundamentalism as part of the New Age. Similarly, John Hick in An Interpretation of Religion (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1989), highlights the structural similarities between certain types of charismatic religion and New Age phenomena. Good critiques of the New Age Movement are rare at present: Michael Perry (Archdeacon of Durham) generally writes well in this area; Wesley Carr's Manifold Wisdom (London, SPCK, 1992) is especially worthy of note; A.R. Brockway & J.P. Rajashekar (eds.) New Religious Movements and the Churches, Geneva, WCC Publications, 1987 contains many useful essays. Readers interested in exploring human responses to the transcendent more generally are referred to James Loder's The Transforming Moment (Colarado Springs, Helmers & Howard, 1989), and Jerry Gill's Mediated Transcendence: A Postmodern Reflection, Macon, Georgia, Mercer Press, 1989.

27. See R. Gill, Competing Convictions, London, SCM, 1989, pp.13ff.

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